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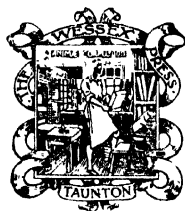
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JOHN IN PRISON AND OTHER POEMS.



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JOHN IN PRISON

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

E. J. THOMPSON

*Author of 'The Enchanted Lady,' 'The Knight Mystic
and Other Verses'*

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ADELPHI TERRACE

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Behold, austere, white-petall'd, 'mid the roses
The lilies bloom ! But oh ! what stranger bud
Is this the Muse among her sheaf discloses,
Whose opening front severe is stained with blood ?

Dawn cheers the pilgrim But the way must end
In darkness, when the Night comes as a friend

TO
FRANK RICHARDS,
ONCE MY TEACHER,
NOW FOR MANY YEARS MY FRIEND.

"Thou honour'st Verse, and Verse must lend her wing
To honour thee "

PREFACE.

READERS of this book will notice a great difference, progressive through its pages, between the opening and closing poems. This difference is not one of date, although the former are generally earlier in composition than the latter. The Muse has been a pilgrim, and her changing attitude corresponds to a change in the wayside melody that accompanied her. There has been a loss of "elves and the idle glamour of the field," but there has come knowledge of a larger country and vision of a sterner beauty.

Of the verses in this book, *John in Prison*, as I now see, was to some extent based upon a misreading of the situation; but it must stand as it is written. *Pheidippides* tells a story which Browning has made the subject of a noble poem. •It expands a thought whose boldness might offend some, if it had not already the authority of Eusebius and of Spenser (see Note on p. 84). This thought, I hope, justifies a second version of the tale. *Love's Fugitive* was written long before I had read or heard of *The Hound of Heaven*. The Sonnet on page 47, *My Earthbound Muse*, was written when I was just sixteen and knew no better than to mix metaphors. *Sunset on the Red Sea* has appeared in the *Spectator*, and the editor's courtesy permits me to reprint it.

The book itself I put forward as my witness to certain things that are being forgotten. The words which served as a motto to *The Enchanted Lady** were untruthful enough, if I think but of the work as it must appear to myself and to others. But as a testimony and an endeavour I know them justified, and the present book in its lightest and least careful pages carries the same message. Much of our present-day poetry is serious without hopefulness and light without joy. Too often it bears the impress of a life divorced from grave and helpful effort, and the poet does not seek or dare to claim with Protesilaus that

“lofty thought,

In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.”

That the book should be spoken of contemptuously or not at all is a small thing to

“the transitory being that beheld

This vision.”

But that my friends should miss the sense of an informing breath and an effort beyond my power would indeed be cause of sorrow. “‘Beloved City of Cecrops,’ spake the olden poet. But wilt not *thou* say . ‘Beloved City of God’ ? ”

E. J. T.

* “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.”

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JOHN IN PRISON

AND OTHER POEMS.

• THE GRAVE BY THE RIVER.

WITH pain he reached the water-side ;
He crawled upon the turf and died ;
And till a long day's force was done
He lay exposed to breeze and sun.

His lips were foul with ooze and dredge ;
His locks were braided black with sedge,
Which twined with tresses not his own
That forehead, cold as Parian stone.

But with the falling of the dew
And night's slow conquest in the blue
The kindly spirits that ride the air
• Received into their pious care,

•
Bidding the winds together bring
The wrecks of many a bygone spring,
And, whilst they gathered leaf and stem,
Proclaim the stranger's requiem.

And Nature, that had given a grave,
Did also from corruption save,
That still, 'neath piled-up leaves and loam,
He sleeps within his quiet home.

John in Prison

And here, oblivious of the damp,
The glow-worm lights her evening lamp,
And voice to voice, across the swell,
The nightingales sing loud and well.

And aye his body from repose
Stiffens, and stark and rigid grows,
At those two hours when, east and west,
God's presence is most manifest. ,

For when the dawn breaks up the night
And heav'n's highways with torch doth light,
And when the gathering sunset thrills
The waiting silence of the hills,

His conscious hands are clasped in prayer,
And, wholly purged from taint of care,
His glowing face, beneath the sod,
Turns, like a sunflower, to his God.

THE FIRST ROSE.

THOUGH crocus, windflower, daffodil, and may
Have glorified the young Year on her way,
Yet something of an imperfection still
Stood off from utmost loveliness, until
To-day at last their gathered splendour glows
In the deep-hearted beauty of the rose.
See how this bright-hued daughter of the sun,
From lips that scarce to open have begun,
Into all winds her message breathes and speaks,
In the eloquent silence of her blushing cheeks,
Of the completer radiance that shall soon
Set seal upon the budding youth of June,
And, drawn to flaunting and triumphant head,
Its empire over copse and garden spread.

VALENTINE VERSE.

WOULD that his feast fell later, when the days
In plenitude of blessing lead along
All gracious things, and in the budding ways
Arouse tumultuous song !
Then from the Queen of Faeries would I plead
Such symbols as should best requite thy meed
And be of my rich love a Valentine,
Of this all-worshipped morn a seal and sign.
Then, Lady, these bleak days for thee I'd fill
With trumpet-flower and folded daffodil,
With Easter-lily and Madonna-bloom,
And that dark bud that marks the Viking's tomb.*
But, exiled here beside the Severn sea,
Type of a love that springs as brave and pure,
Only white snowdrops can I send to thee,
Orphans of Spring, yet able to endure,
Whatever snows or freezing wind of blight
Retard the full-flowered Summer of delight.

* Pasque-flower (*Anemone pulsatilla*) ; said to grow where Danish blood has been shed ; often found on old barrows in the Eastern counties.

TO THE OLD YEAR.

OLD Friend whose face I know !
With blustering winds, of bitter, biting flight
Wilt thou depart, and snow,
Old Friend whose face is turned away from light ?

Or wilt thou mask thy might
And gentler than an April whisper go
Towards the dusk of times accomplished quite ?

My heart is grieved at loss of thee, although
Thy brow is dark and thy successor's bright ;
I hardly think to love another so,
Old Friend whose face is turned away from light.

TO THE NEW YEAR.

I HAVE not seen thee yet, although 'thy face,
Against the background of my visions set,
My thoughts endow with all imagined grace.
I have not seen thee yet.

We have not seen nor met,
But ever nearer rings thy hastening pace ;
Thy hurrying feet against the pavement fret.

The gifts in dreams thou bring'st and kind embrace
See that in coming thou dost not forget.
Ah ! me ! What anguish will be mine, in case
I have not seen thee yet !

THE MARRIAGE OF EDEN AND EAMONT

LET other bards the married name
Of Medway and of Thames proclaim.
The river gods revere no less
A wedding in the wilderness,
Where Eamont, from her mountain home
'Mid peak and pike and wooded dome,
To willowy Eden shepherds down
An equal flock of wavelets brown,
A bride that to her partner brings,
As he, the blood and dower of kings,
And condescends her unmatched state
To marriage with the worthiest mate.

Oh with what pomp, what gracious care,
For nuptials of this singing pair
With flaming fingers o'er the world
Dawn lights the heav'ns, unscrolled, unfurled,
Whose frequent bow for omen bends
And heav'n with earth in blessing blends !
The woodland bank above them towers,
Hung head to foot with festive bowers
And arras'd with a million flowers ;
The willows at the waterside
Erect in interwoven pride,
Where first their waves together march,
O'erhead, a hymenæal arch,
Beneath which canopy of state
The joyful waters clasp and mate
And otters, as the light grows dim,
Whistle a cheerful nuptial hymn.

PARCUS DEORUM CULTOR ET INFREQUENS.

FROM Penrith to Langwathby as we went,
My friend and I, expecting from the grace
Of whatso woodgods haunted in that place
No such supreme event,
Where pine-trees fringed the roadway we surprised
A tiny bunny, from the warren strayed,
Who could not be disguised
For lack of fronded shade,
So, vainly agile, sought the friendly gap
Wherethrough at first he gave his parents slip.
But, having pinned beneath my comrade's cap,
We raised the squealing exile in our grip.
Then, whether by our trembling prize supposed
Capricious giants eager for his hurt,
Or sylvan powers whose temper ill-disposed
Their victims must by timely vows avert,
I know not ; but before his dear white face
He clasped his quaking paws which supplicated
Arousal of our grace
And anger deprecated.
So, having calmed his fears and open laid
Our purpose, from his harm how far removed,
And having, too, reproved
For folly that he strayed,
With helpful speech and admonition kind
We put him o'er the wall and watched him haste
The bracken covert and his kin to find,
And, breathless from his dire adventure, tell
How craftily he bore himself and well
When in predicament of peril placed.

TO WILLIAM CANTON.

'A good poet and one longed for by his friends.'—ARISTOPHANES.

A DAY of flying wind and falling rain,
And one white sacred head, whose snowy locks,
Receding as we followed!, fought the storm
Like Shakespeare's stricken king! Hast thou
forgot,

O Pilgrim of the Fens, whose plight that day
Assuredly stirred the blessed Spirits, that still
Move on those reedy plats, to pitying tears,
Stern grief, and anger at myself whose guile
Had lured those reverend hairs into the blast?
Yet I, too, fitly might their love accuse
Somewhat of slackness to their worshipper.

"Where were ye, Saints, when the remorseless
rain

Poured on the head of your loved annalist?
For neither were ye playing"—

(Here the Muse
Checks, with no gentle touch, the current reed
Blasphemous; then with warning frown com-
mands

Less impious numbers. Let her scribe resume,
Subdued, like stricken schoolboy after sin).
Dost thou remember how we stood at gaze,
Regardless of the pelting, pitiless rain,
Against the dripping stones, where Guthlac
looked,

Mooring his skiff beside the farrowed sow,
Benignant at his lovers? Pega there
With many a mitred saint, severe aloft
In youthful beauty, or in gracious age
August, sent blessing through the reeking blast.

John in Prison

Then George (not he that slew the dragon) led
To where the Carthaginian, from the strife
Of Zama fleeing, built of pleachèd reeds
A cell (hard by that ancient bridge where sits
The Great Stone King mysterious 'mid his folk)
And holy hospitality dispensed
To fervent pilgrims, swinked with travail long
And plunging in the treacherous wilderness.
I was the Muse's herbalist, who culled
Each brookside weed, its virtues and its kind
Proclaiming, flowering flag or arrowhead,
Pink willow-herb, or mallow every spring
Reviving—

Friend, forgive me, since I still
In trivial records find a bond that knits
Old days with thought of thee ! Those kindling
eyes,
That face so nobly furrowed with the smiles
That foil an adverse fate, I see no more.
I may not share the punning jest, or word
Whose whisper in Elysium surely brings
Solace to bravest ghosts, rejoiced to know
Their memory living in a heart so dear.
Time must run on ; yet I, that loved thee once,
Must love thee ever, knowing our day has borne
No gentler spirit nor humbler toward thy God,
Poet, and father of Winifred, and my friend !

THE MASQUE OF MAY

[*Curtain rises. The Spirit of Spring discovered alone as a young man dressed in green*].

SPIRIT OF SPRING.—

Now falls the morn whereon we celebrate
Her birth, whose advent and triúmphing march,
Flower-witnessed through our catkin-dusty ways
And by attendant winds invisible
Blazed under heav'n, our fields have waited long.
This day our village lads, at blush of dawn,
Climbing the hoar front of yon shouldered hill
(White with new hawthorn and the scattering sloe),
Washed innocent hands in dew, and plighted troth,
And each did to his chosen maid present,
As signal of my conquest and their love,
Victorious palm, plucked from the o'er-branchèd
brook.

Now would they bring, girt with her loyal guard,
The lady whom their sifted fancy calls
To Queen and Mistress of their Festival,
And, by report, a fair one. I, as meet,
Since Guardian of this gracious season bland,
Its sceptred Prince and Genius, wait to crown
This lass unparagon'd, their chosen queen,
Who far as this rich month extends shall sway
Her all-subduing wand and bow to her
All manly knees in fealty. Thus I speak,
Making my errand known and presence here.
But hist! what clarion sounds? My masquers come,
Shouting, and in their lusty front, I swear,
Bold Robin Hood and all his merry men,
From every drowsy oak and ancient thorn
Shaking the echo with their travelling horn.

John in Prison

Enter Robin Hood, Scarlet, Friar Tuck, Much, George o' Green, etc., and rustics.

ROBIN HOOD.—Quiet your bugles a space ; have we not a song wherewith to greet this season and to sound before our coming lady ?

FRIAR TUCK.—Assuredly ; and the holy clerk shall sing it. Space, lads, for your jolly father. *Eructavit cor meum* ; I speak of the things that I have made.

(sings)

Then rouse ye with sherry, my lads, and be merry
With sherry, with sherry, that tints like a cherry
His nose who in revel sends care to the devil
And finds in a tankard salvation.

And be ye not wary of jolly canary
That causes the greybeard to skip like a fairy—

SCARLET.—Peace, fat friar ; quiet, thou bawdy priest. Geordie, if he be not still, catch our mad priest one o' the costard.

FRIAR TUCK.—What, are ye for sacrilege ? Then must the Church triumphant become the Church militant. Bear off, George o' Green ; bear off, Much, thou miller's son—thy father stole the widow's pigwash ; that much I learnt in confession. Nay, an you keep not off your unwashen hands, I will convert ye with my quarter-staff.

ROBIN HOOD.—Quiet, my merry men. Reverend Father, thou shalt revel anon ; I will intercede with the Mistress of this meeting to allow thee a barrel of ale, an thou wilt be quiet now. The Queen is coming ; let us not be seen unseemly. Have your song ready and begin, my good men all.

FORESTERS.—(*sing*)

The bluebell lifts its heavy spire
Embossed with azure bloom,
A halo as of fairy fire
Enwraps the spiky broom.
Its cup of snowy petals frail
The anemone forgoes,
And, prophesied through cliff and vale,
The pageant of the rose
Puts forth, in mossy bud and emerald spray,
The heralds of a fuller triumph-day.

*Enter Queen of May, attended by Oberon, Titania and
elves.*

SPIRIT OF SPRING.—

Well have you done, bold foresters, right well
To greet this radiant advent with a song
Such as did worthily blaze forth the pomp
And showerèd glory of our lady's reign.
Right glad am I your hearts are now toward
This our rich pageant, purposed to present
May's sceptred place and honour excellent.

ROBIN HOOD.—Dread sir, an it please you, we Sher-
wood foresters have yet another song.

SPIRIT OF SPRING.—

Let it wait, good Robin. You see our Mistress
is in presence.
Great Queen of Faery, say, is this the maid
(As by surmisal from your escort hither
And brave attendance gathered) whom our lads
Have chosen for the crown of this great day,
A mortal bud among the flowers of May?

PUCK.—This is the wench our clouted clowns have
chosen, an you mean this. She shall be their
queen, as known the fairest female clown, until

what time that climbing usurper Ale take to himself the sovereignty of their few wits.

OBERON.—Marry, shalt be a clouted clown thyself. Thou and the mad friar shall play at quarterstaff. Then shall the lusty father clout thee well.

FRIAR TUCK.—Callest thou me mad? But no matter. Thou art but King of shadows, and I, that am no shadow, will not square with thee. But I will not play at quarterstaff with Goblin. Shall I strike at a gossamer? Shall I war with the floating down of dandelion? Let me have a fat head to smack, as I do thine, Much, thou miller's son. *(Strikes Much).*

MUCH.—'Zounds, I will crack thy skull; my scone has not sung so these ten years; it will be swelled, sure, by the morrow. Hold him, Geordie; he has smitten thy gossip, and that sorely.

ROBIN HOOD.—Silence, men. Though this be a day of revel, trust me, you push licence too far. Here be two fair queens waiting till your pranks cease. What! would you be bewitched? Anger not our Lady of the Night; she hath ever been gracious to us.

TITANIA.—

Fear not, good Robin. Well we know by this
Your ghostly brawler, nor will take amiss
Aught that the jolly priest with frolic wit
Performs of mischief in his boisterous fit.
No more of him, then. But, our noble lord,
Known for the Prince that of this cowslip'd sward
And budded slades hast sovereign masterdom,
Your question waits our answer. We have come,
Bringing this maid to this fair festival
Whom for their queen the lads acknowledge all;

No village lass, though such she seem to be,
 But daughter of a squire of high degree,
 Who, smiting to the dust the paynim's pride,
 For Holy Church in dreadful battle died.
 Then by her wicked uncle was this maid
 Deserted in a winding forest-glade ;
 Three days she did her frightened paces keep ;
 But at the fourth sank into slumber deep,
 The scarlet-coated, woodland chorister
 Strewing fresh leaves and daisies over her,
 And with his pious gossip, the brown wren,
 Guarding her corse from wolves and evil men.
 There found we her, though not in death, in
 sleep

So fraught with cruel sorrow and so deep
 That not till Merlin, that enchanter great,
 Waved wand o'er her, could she her mortal state
 Take up, and once again, in living wise,
 Move as a maid, with glancing foot and eyes.
 Then to a cot, where a poor widow wept
 Her new-dead child, at hush of night we crept,
 Leaving the living lass, instead of her
 Bearing away, with all due rites t'inter,
 The poor, cold shell : who wills, can see the
 . grave

In Epping Ride, where catkin'd birches wave.
 But for this lass from our rich love befell
 All graces that become a maiden well,
 Whence is it that to-day our Faery Court,
 In her great convoy, to this feast resort,
 Such honour'd state as hath before been shown
 To none, nor shall be by another known.
 Now, since the rite is yours, dread Prince, we
 pray
 Proclaim and crown this peerless Lass of May.

SPIRIT OF SPRING.—

Blithely, great Queen ; and my dear thanks be
yours

That now have graced our coronation thus.

For you, sweet lady, here my knee in homage,

First subject of your sceptred loveliness,

And then my cheek in greeting. Well you present

This season's queen, than whom nor radiant June,

Renowned mistress of the sunclad ways,

Nor milder April of the glancing brows,

Star-filleted and lovely, fairer shows

Nor dearer is to mortal sight. I crown you,

(crowns the May Queen).

Elected Queen of this great festival,

And thus conduct you to your seat. Hail, lady !

ALL.—

Hail, royal lady, whom for queen we take

And mistress of our heart's allegiance make !

OBERON.—An it please your majesty, will you open
your courts forthwith ? Here is a faery with a
grievous complaint against a miller.

FRIAR TUCK.—That is Much, I warrant me. They
be all rascals, but Much more than the most.
Did not I say his father stole Widow Giles' pig-
wash ? And he himself hath oft put sand in my
beer ; wherefore, had not Robin interceded, I
had made him excommunicate, and delivered
him over to this my crab cudgel, which is my
secular arm. *(Flourishes his staff).*

MUCH.—Scurrilous hedge-priest, thou liest. I am
no miller, but an honest miller's son.

FRIAR TUCK.—It is all one. Thou wert miller still,
did not the fear of my staff keep thee converted.

MUCH.—'Zounds, I will convert thee from drinking ale and munching pasty for ever.

GEORGE O'GREEN.—Then wouldst thou be as the blessed Francis, for thou wouldst have converted a wolf.

SCARLET.—Quiet, Geordie. The Queen will speak.

MAY QUEEN.—

Dread King of Faery, we will hear this case.

Let the twain come, and put them face to face.

FRIAR TUCK.—Stand forth, Much. Dost thou hear ? thou art wanted. There is search being made for a thief.

MUCH.—I tell thee, I will not stand forth.

FRIAR TUCK.—Then thou shalt stand fifth and be-like lose thy beer-money.*

OBERON.—Puck, an that fat priest continue to brawl, pinch him into stillness.

FRIAR TUCK.—Nay, sweet Robin Goodfellow, I will be quiet ; I will lie down, I will contain myself. *Confiteor*, I confess ; I am a great sinner, or rather, have been, for I am so no longer. Only, I beseech thee, bid Much be quiet ; though he is but Much, in his cups he hath been overmuch already, though it is yet morning. Now am I quiet. Proceed, masters.

OBERON.—Your Majesty, the miller is not in presence ; 'tis no matter, for beyond doubt he hath heinously offended. You had best hear what my faery hath to say, then deliver sentence. The Faery Realm will be executor.

* This joke, which is of great antiquity, is a favourite with London Sunday-school boys. It is usually Moses who is represented as being penalised for an error in order of precedence.

FAERY.—

Lady, there dwells a miller by the weir,—

FRIAR TUCK.—

Where I have taken many a pot of beer.

Nay, good Robin, I will offend no more. Proceed with your case, sweet moonfilm ; get you on, blithe thistleseed.

FAERY.—

A miller, falsest of his thieving sort,
Justly obnoxious to the Faery Court,
Who these ten years hath robb'd the people's
corn,
Checking his bags with lying weights forsworn.
Moreover, so that none flows on to turn
The wheels of other millers, from the burn
He draws the merry waters, and hath built
A mighty dam.

FRIAR TUCK.—Fie, this is monstrous guilt !

Dost thou swear, degenerate faery ? Or is it the miller that spake thus ? Here must the Church lend an ear ; the case calls for discipline, and my crab must be ready.

FAERY.—

Nor is this all. For he with greedy sluice
Hath drained the waters of the fen for use,
So that the meadow, glorious from of old
With flaunting flag and gaudy marigold,
In whose rich lap the crown imperial
(Which some fritillary and snake's-head call)
Rang out, from drooping white and mottled bells
Our dian and the day's departing knells,
Sounding far summons to the Elfin Folk,
What time the owl to shouting flight awoke,

Calling the evejar from his pinetree bole
To swart campaign and vigilant patrol,
This mead, I say, the richest of the shire
In globèd buds that hold the fairy fire,
Where grew the ragged robin without stint,
Horehound, and fennel, fragrant calamint,
With nodding grasses where a man might hide,
Kingcups and rush, is wrinkled, cracked, and
dried.

The grass of Parnass withers, plantains tall,
Bellflower, and crowding orchis droop and fall ;
Sweet bogbean, arrowhead, and sundew die,
And royal fern in brittle stacks doth lie ;
So that the folk, in winter fires to burn,
Gather our flowers, and dryshod thence return,
Where Puck was wont to trip the careless clown
Into the plunging mire, to souse and drown.
Dank Will is homeless, too, who dwelt therein
And to the Faery Folk is next of kin.

OBERON.—'Tis a grievous indictment. I beseech
your majesty to say what were best to do unto
this villain.

TITANIA.—

Say, why hath Faery Realm endured so long
From such a paltry knave this cruel wrong ?

SECOND FAERY.—

Lady, before his cot an elder grows,
And ever with him, wheresoe'er he goes,
Both four-leaved clover and an elder-sprout
He bears, and puts our elvish spells to rout.

FRIAR TUCK.—Truly, a crafty miller. Wouldst thou
have thus much sense, thinkest thou, Much, thou
miller's son ? But, methinks, crab is better than
elder.

MAY QUEEN.—

Doubtless, as in your charge set forth, the man
Hath righteously incurred your heaviest ban ;
Nor is there any pain would fall amiss,
No discipline, to such a knave as this.
Yet would I, on my coronation day,
Put mercy forth, and hand of vengeance stay.
I pray you, masters, spare him for this time ;
Let him be warned to keep from further crime
By this our reverend friar. I would not stain,
Being a maiden queen, my innocent reign
With pang of any wretch or sinner's pain.

OBERON.—O monstrous ! Spare a miller ! Then will
our state crumble and fall. Lady, this must not be.

ROBIN HOOD.—An it please your Majesty, 'tis a case
for discipline ; he that useth unlawful spells, let
the Church see to him. We must meet elder
with that is more potent ; and our ghostly father
in the gospel hath a monstrous crab. Let the
Friar see to him. I give my voice for the Friar.

FRIAR TUCK.—Bless thee, blithe Robin, thou hast
well spoken. I will save his sinful soul, an I
have to break every bone in the rascal's body.
He shall endure chastening for a season. I will
lead a new crusade, and instead of Saracens I
will smite millers. *Quare fremuerunt gentes ?*
Why do the heathen rage, and the millers set
themselves together ?

(sings) For a thorny stick of the crabtree thick,
If rightly and tightly applied,
Is a healing balm for the sinner's qualm
And a soothing thing for his pride.
For it breaks his skin and it drowns his din,
And he saves his soul with his hide.

OBERON.—Let the Friar see the miller, Lady ; let him be confessor for the nonce. We can leave our case to the Friar.

MAY QUEEN.—

It shall be so, then. Friar, the task is yours
To this sick soul t'apply the balm that cures.

SCARLET.—But shrive him gently, holy father. Thou art like to get small benefit of clergy since thou didst loot the Abbot of Walsingham's canary. Commit no murder then.

FRIAR TUCK.—Why, had I not need ? Was not mine great right ? And how saith Holy Writ ? Are not the weapons of my warfare carnal and not spiritual ? Was I not the Abbot's right reverend brother ? Did I not well to remove that whereby my brother was caused to stumble ?

SCARLET.—And to whack him into the well when he found thee ? Alas ! poor miller ! The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

ROBIN HOOD.—

Get to your bows, my men. We have crowned
our queen.

Now will we to our sports upon the green.
Scarlet and Much shall play at quarterstaff,
And the mad Friar his fill of liquor quaff.

OBERON.—One minute, Robin ; here are petitioners to our lady. And with them, by my halidom, is that holy Knight who slew the dragon.

Enter St. George and rustics.

FRIAR TUCK.—Pity thee, poor worm ! Thou shouldst have learnt to play at quarterstaff, then no knight in Christendom would slay thee. An he tried, thou wouldst rattle his armour about his bones.

ST. GEORGE.—

Great King and Empress of the Faery State,
Hearing her fame whose worth ye celebrate,
What could I else but turn aside to see
The face I saw in its sweet infancy,
When scarce six summers from its heav'nly source
Her soul's fresh stream had run its shining course?
For know, what time I had three dragons slain
And in my wounds had gotten grievous pain,
Touched with their poisonous gore, and spent,
and weak,
I did the great magician Merlin seek,
Where bound with his own spells by cunning deft
The sage within his circle Vivian left.
Whence, when ye bore this maid unto his bower
Forworn with sleep, I saw her in that hour,
Since when, I swear, I have a lover been,
For these twelve years, of your enchanted Queen.

GEORGE O'GREEN.—He rimes featly. Think you,
Much, this grand seigneur is in earnest? But
he proceeds.

ST. GEORGE.—

To you, sweet lady, next my knee I bend
And vow, in token of my love, to send
The crest of the next dragon that I slay.
Now to my task. These rustics beg me say,
Since to yourself they dare not rudely press,
They crave a boon of your crown'd loveliness.
'Twas known of old and by our fathers held,
Who in wise lore this later age excelled,
The orchard would its crop for wassail yield
And richest foison fill the waving field,
Only if o'er the glebe a maiden went
In royal pomp of beauty innocent,

Moving a queen, a lady manifest,
In holy mirth, with winning looks that blest.
Wherefore they pray you, if you love them well,
Prosper their tillage with this hallowed spell.

MAY QUEEN.—

That will we ; but our sports must first proceed.
Come, Robin. Let the archers strive for meed ;
Then, as their various games in order fall,
The rest. Ourselves will crown the victors all.

ROBIN HOOD.—First, an it please your majesty, let
the Sherwood foresters sing their second song.

MAY QUEEN.—Gladly, good Robin. Art not thou
prime minister in our realm of May ?

ROBIN HOOD.—I thank your majesty. Where is the
Friar ?

SCARLET.—He hath fallen out with Puck, whereby
he hath got a ducking. Since then he hath met
with a butt of canary, and by now is drunk and
disorderly. He is chasing the rustics, and thrash-
ing their children ; four fowls hath he slain al-
ready.

Enter Friar Tuck.

FRIAR TUCK.—Thou liest ; it was but three, and the
fourth is disabled only. I have put my head in
a bucket, and by a miracle it hath happened that
it is become clear again. Let me sing before our
lady, as David did before the Queen of Sheba.
Also, I will dance.

ROBIN HOOD.—None of thy loose ditties, Friar.
Come, thou hast a deep voice, like sea-thunder
in a cave. Thou shalt sing with us.

FORESTERS.—(*sing*)

Archers good from the deep greenwood
To this holy wake, our bourn,
We have fared all night by the lift-hung light
Of our Lady's glimmering horn.
To the boding owl and the wild wolf's howl
We have sped through the pathways free,
That to all this folk may at large be spoke
What manner of men we be.
Without all fear we strike at the deer,
For the woodland realm is our own ;
No sheriff we dread, for our prowess is spread,
Through Nottinghamshire it is known.
Unrobbed of his wares the poor man fares,
But if a fat abbot we find
Or an archbishop we rifle his crop
And the rascals beat and bind.
For Robin Hood our captain good
Had bid us to harm no jot
Poor knaves that fare, but never to spare
A bishop or sleek abbòt,
So we beat and bind whenever we find
A bishop or sleek abbòt.

(*kneeling*)

But lady, though we outlaws be,
Accept our faith and fealty,
Who in your sceptred grace alone
Our queen and radiant mistress own.

THE WANDER-MAIDEN.

GENTLE sir, discover
Where you left my lover.
O believe me when I say
That he mocks me night and day.

Though my cheek be wet,
'Tis with dew not weeping.
Couched against a glow-worm's light,
Cold I lay i' the fern last night,
Whilst my love was sleeping.

Wherefore should he leave me ?
Wherefore vex and grieve me ?
Sir, be sure he seeks me still
Over dale and over hill.

See the cap I bear,
All of buds so bonny !
By the glint o' the willywisp
I plucked them with their leaves so crisp,
Or ever day grew sunny.

Gentle, tell my lover,
If he'd me discover
He can find me dusk and morn,
Light of sun or kelpie's horn.

John in Prison

SONG.

HER face was as sweet
(Though misted with tears),
Her face was as sweet
As a lily appears
When with rain its eyes fill
In the month of April.

As a rose breaks in bud,
So with beauty she glowed
As the tide of her blood
Welled up and o'erflowed,
But her heart it grew still
As a cloud in April.

And her soul through its pain
Was eager beneath,
As a flower that is fain
To slip from its sheath,
As a green daffodil
That bursts in April.

And in beauty she came
Out of sorrow a queen,
As the morn breaks in flame
Through the clouds that would screen,
As a morn that is chill
And fresh in April.*

* Cf. the early lyric *I sing a lady*, in which an anonymous poet has rung out of "April" a peal so exquisite that I could not resist the temptation to take in hand the same fairy bells.

LAUS MUSARUM.

WHAT magic powers dwell in the lyre !
How mighty is the Muse's fire,
Which, where the holy Maidens will,
Hath burnt of old and burneth still !
Pan piping in the cloistered alleys,
Phœbus in the open valleys,
Drew not men and beasts alone
But thrilled each several stock and stone,
And won together
Birds of every plume and feather,
Charmed the kid and charmed the lion.
Wise Amphion
Reared with lute a city fair,
Which so prodigal of splendour
Laughed upon th' enamoured air
That the wearied winds at eve
Did their swelling journeys leave,
And a glorious homage render,
Laying their heavy wings at rest
Above each gilt and marbled crest,
Bowing their heads, with sacred fires
Bound about and garlanded,
And hymning, with low voice of dread,
The city of the seven spires.

CURFEW BELL.

WHERE the curling brake is crisp,
Dark winds lisp ;
And the air,
Heavy with the scent of mould,
Sleeps, where groves grotesque and fair
With their arras'd arms enfold
Sights no mortal may behold.
Rustling harebells strike a tune,
And, when day is drowsed and dumb,
In high pageant 'neath the moon
Mab and wanded Oberon come ;
Where the mottled toadstools stand,
Whilst their well-groomed beetles prance,
Watch their midget vassals dance
Hand-in-hand :
Merry Puck, convener high
Of this jocund revelry,
Rides, with woodbine conch supplied,
At the elfin empress' side.

SONGS FROM A MASQUE.

I.

HERMES, the god of azure air,
Once stept from heavenly heights to where,
Upon a grassy steep,
'Mid springing tulips, daffodillies,
And a thousand early lilies,
Narcissus lay asleep.

“ These flowers, that down each mountain-side
Wander in couples scattered wide,—
Did they,” then said the god,
“ Or ere thy coming prank this lawn,
Or have they, by thy beauty drawn,
Flocked to this favoured sod ? ”

II.

I' the oozy concave of the seas
Are weltering, marble palaces,
Where Amphitritè, child of Ocean,
Draws the sailor's far devotion,
Sitting within her watery home,
Whose sounding bosom mocks the foam
Of heav'n's serene, uplifted dome.

AMONG THE FERN.

ALONE in this mysterious world I move,
As one c'ertaken by darkness in a grove,
Who looks between the swaying bracken-boughs,
And sees the knit and strangely puckered brows
Of wizened fays, and marks their twinkling fires.
And, while he hearkens to their rippling lyres,
All elfin-chased and bossed with faery gold,
Covers his eyes and hardly dares behold
The magic minstrels and their midget king,
Nor knows the language quaint in which they sing,
But lowly whispers : " Blest is he that hears
This silvern emulation of the spheres,
The little heather-harpers with their play
Compose the throbbing eyelids of the day,
When sunset glories long have left the sky,
And twitting bats on vampire-pinion fly."

THE OCTOBER MOON.

Now, she that is of heav'n the shepherdess
And casts sinister influence on the seas,
Who rules the Plough, the Bear, the Pleiades,
All stars with their conjunctions, great and less ;
Whose sway the gathered clouds of Jove confess,
When drawn together by the Hyades,
(Those rainy Kids that empty to the lees
Heav'n's cisterns high, when grapes are in the press
And jolly Autumn reels with vintage home),—
I saw her mounted in the Night's cool dome,
'Mid stretching clouds of more than marble whiteness.
A circling nimbus clung like yellow hair
About that face of sun-surpassing brightness,
And underneath the sleeping Earth lay fair.

S. KATHERINE'S VALLEY.

WHAT was it wrought this miracle ? A gleam
Of windflowers from the unforgotten years,
A covert flushed with April.

Home again

I hastened, with a tingling breeze behind,
All morn across the level heights till noon,
Then climbed to Lansdown. In the wind aloft
The Monument stood bleak ; the cawing rooks
Turned to the blast alternate wings ; below
Spurge-laurel bloomed, and primrose. Then I knew
The countryside was full of ghosts for me,
So travelled onward, awed. My friend and I
Spake, and we parted. I went forth alone,
And dropped into a valley ; at my feet,
Tumbled among the furrows by the plough,
Lay ammonites, whereby I saw the stones,
That gained a voice from that primæval surge
Where once they lived and tossed, in league with me.
I climbed and dipped again into a vale.
All silent—not the cry of any bird
Throughout those conscious coverts broke the spell.
No voice, save Tadwick in his murmurous flow
Beneath his mossy pollards ; not a nymph
But from her ferny shelter saw me come
And knew me, though long years had been since last
My foot was on those meadows.

Still I climbed,

And up through sleeping Swainswick marked the walls
With trichomanes clustered as of old,
Wall-rue and periwinkle. The height at last,
I looked to Katherine's Valley ; here I paused.

I knew those woods ablaze with daffodil ;
And store of mint and fragrant weeds the brook
Still fed along his course, and, dearer yet,
White violets still, thank God ! and glowing clumps
Of primrose innocent-eyed.

But, as I turned,
A wood all white like April, snowed throughout
And sheeted with anemones, I saw.
Then was the spell fulfilled. All seasons now
Were with me ; and I saw the magpie beat
Across the frozen valley to his fir ;
I saw the broomrape 'neath the oak, the slopes
With cowslip and with milkwort carpeted ;
I heard the chestnut patter, and the rain
Drip on the steaming leaves ; and these frail buds
Tossed to no earthly breeze but took the wind
Of seasons flowered and fall'n. And from the grove,
Elusive of the years that fain would bring
An altered look to those proud eyes, a touch
Of fading youth to those devoted brows,
My old companions stepped and gathered round.
I, seated on a stone, beheld them come.

FROM KALIDASA'S SAKUNTALA.

I.

Beauty in Homespun.

HER charms are manifest, although a robe
Of twisted fibres, over her shoulders thrown,
Swathe half her breast, like yellow leaves enclosing
A sun-bright flower. The lotus, though dull moss
Crown it, is lovely ; and, with dewy beams,
The Moon, for all its darker spots, is fairer.
The bark she wears itself plucks lustre from
Her gentle eyes and but augments my passion.
Many rough stalks support the waterlily
And many glorious blossoms hang thereon.

II.

An Indian Dawn.

THE moon has gone : the night-flower, sweet no
more,
Only remembrance of its odour left,
Pines like a bride deserted, plunged in pain
Intolerable at absence of her lord.
Yonder vadari's dew-drops redden with dawn ;
And now the peacock flings off sleep and flies
From the hermits' huts, woven of sacred grass ;
The antelope, upspringing from his rest,
Displays his grace of lineament and limb.
See how the moon that placed his foot but now
On summit of the king of hills and climbed,
Routing the rear of night, to Vishnu's palace,
Has fallen from his heav'n—like men who strain
Up to the heights, to easily fall again !

FROM THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY.

The Shepherd's Dedication. *Theocritus.*

HERE unto Pan Daphnis the fair, who mated
The lusty clarion with his pastoral notes,
Notched reeds, and crook, and javelin keen devotes,
Fawncloak, and wallet once with apples freighted.

Inscription for a Spring. *Anonymous.*

Nymph-leader, two-horned dweller on the mountain !
Dread Pan, whose rocky haunt is here, we pray
To be good lord to us, who seek this fountain,
Our thirst at its unfailing wave to allay.

The Lover's Garland. *Meleager.*

I'll twine white violets and with myrtle bind
Narcissus frail ; the laughing lilies too,
Sweet crocus, and the hyacinth dark of hue
With roses dear to lovers shall be twined,
That Heliodora's brows the fragrant-tressed,
The lovely-locked, may be by flowers caressed.

The Small Singer. *Aristodemus.*

Thee, clear-voiced friend, no more on the hill-crest
singing
Towards Alkis' wealthy home the sun shall see.
For Klymenus' fields already art thou winging
And dewy flowers of Queen Persephone.

*The Muses' Grove.**Anonymous.*

The books beside the planes mark well, the wood
Now for the Muses' holy haunt confess !
We that are guard, if comes a lover good,
Fillet his forehead with the ivy-tress.

*Epitaph on Dionysius of Tarsus.**Anonymous.*

With threescore years here Dionysius lies,
Unmarried—Would his sire had been as wise !

*Epitaph on a Cretan Merchant.**Simonides.*

Brotachos of Gortyna's grave is here ;
He came from Crete to seek far other gear.

DIRGE.

GHOUL nor vampire come anear thee,
Icy worm and grub forbear thee
In thine awful solitude ;
But amid the dusky twilight
Let the white-wing'd lilies brood.

Now at will thy shade can wander
Thro' Elysian-meadow'd joy ;
Nevermore shall carking slander
Work thy spotless soul annoy ;
Freed from this world's piteous madness,
Throbs of joy nor aches of sadness
Can thy seated peace destroy.

Dear in life the woodland brake,
Thorough which, as evening fell,
Didst thou press, and 'neath the hazels
Hearken unto Philomel ;
Nor shall death a severance make :
But with tangled roots shall willow
Knot thy head a fitting pillow.

And anigh thee shall the alders
Shiver to the wind's low dirge,
Where the yellow iris leans its
Blossoms o'er the stream's dark verge ;
And where, thro' the lushgreen grasses
Sadly the brown wavelet passes,
Bulrush sway its downy fingers.

John[•] in Prison

And the busy winds shall bring,*
As they whisper to and fro,
Goodly odours of the Spring,
Sucked from all the flowers that blow ;
And around thy grave shall pour
Every one his spicy store.

Never o'er thy grave be heard
Shriek of that foreboding bird ;
But the pipe, at dusky morn,
Of the little lavrock blend
With the nightingale's that sings
Close amid the flowering thorn.

And the redbreast and the wren
With fresh blooms thy sleep shall cover ;
Hedged about with clustering lilies,
Haunted bracken frond thee over :
Yea, Queen Mab herself shall weep where
Lies the dearest mortal dead,
As the wizened moonbeams sadly
Peep from freckled boughs o'erhead.

Vampires that do shriek and yell
Through the mazes of the wood,
Fain would break
On thine hallowed solitude—
But I against that crew will charm thee :
Neither fiend nor goblin harm thee ;
Owl nor shrilly bat alarm thee ;
But above thee let the Pleiads
In their silver sadness brood !

Cf. Henry Vaughan's "Olor Iscanus."

"The factor wind from far shall bring
The odours of the scattered Spring,
And loaden with the rich arrear,
Spend it in spicy whispers here."

THE POET'S GRAVE.

THE nurtured of the sun and rain,
They gave him back to earth again ;
The great Earth-Mother, meekly proud,
Received his body from the crowd.

Through a long day his soul had striven
For closer conference with the heaven,
Whence is his grave an hilly one,
Yon tallest pensioner of the sun.

He sang for others. Now for him
The nightingales, through uplands dim,
Chant till the harbinger of dawn
Springs from the dewy, tangled lawn.

For, since beneath his lyre's control
Nature appeared, a reasoning soul,
Her meanest creatures gladly pay
These quiet honours to his clay.

The tired heart, the tired brain,
Are rendered back to Earth again ;
The mountain stillness, mountain rest,
His awful sepulchre invest.

He would have slept i' the east, where stand
Those hills that herald to his land
The dawn's red coming ; but that hour
Of rushing and awakening power,

John in Prison

'Twas held, would only make less deep
His tenor of much-needed sleep,
Wherefore, beside the Atlantic's wave,
He looks towards the west, which gave

His exiled brethren peace—below
Th' emancipating waters flow,
And here, at shimmering ebb of day,
The glowing clouds shall pause and pray.

SIR RALPH.

WHETHER I came or not,
What! did it matter to her?
Matter if *I* forgot,
I that had striven to woo her?

I had sought her love and had failed.
My lady—God's grace be upon her!—
Her Holy of Holies unveiled
To one more worthy the honour.

Yet now for a night and a day
Post-haste through the realm I had ridden,
Summoned the old, sweet way,
Knight to her service bidden.

Then, till her message came,
I paused in an arbour shady,
I that was Knight of the Name,
Knight to God and my lady.

“Ralph”—so her missive ran—
“I lay on thee this hard burden,
I that know thee a man,
I that can offer no guerdon.”

And because her pleasure was plain,
I that was lord nor lover
Strove, and journeyed again
Home, with the peril over.

John in Prison

What though she spake never word
Nor suffered me come unto her ?
Her message is but deferred
Ye judged not thus if ye knew her !

For though this flesh shall decay,
These eyes shall glimmer and darken,
She will take my hand, she will say. . .
I shall both see her and hearken.

I shall see her face as the light
Who laid on me this hard burden,
She that knew me a knight,
She that could offer no guerdon.

DOVEROW HILL.

THIS is my seat, my station ; on this hill
Enthron'd, I send my travelling glance afar
To where, 'mid sandy spit and stretching bar,
Proud Severn, witless of th' ungracious skill
To bend her purpose to another's will,
Loiters, while for his love that lingers late,
With oft impetuous clamour at her gate
And pacings of the shore, foiled Ocean still
Keeps restless tryst. The shaggy hills of Dean
Climb through the haze ; I mark the speeding
train

To that dear city I long to see again ;
The yaffle chuckles from his dim retreat ;
And through the mounting morn with clarion keen
Oft his shrill call doth Chanticleer repeat.

HONISTER CRAGS.

MAKE a goblet of thy hands.
Here, where from the mountain's crown
Leap the crystal runnels down,
Gather what thy need demands ;
Drink, and from the freshening spray
Move with thankful heart away.

CHILD OF ACHILLES.

CHILD of Achilles, not for thee
Nor all that share thy powerful name
Will the dread lords of destiny
Relax their universal claim.

The poet to the tomb descends ;
Alike the priest and victim fall ;
Dust cries to dust ; and Fate attends
Impartially on lord and thrall.

Earth the inscrutable and calm,
Mute mother of a noisy race,
Crowneth alike with pine and palm
The slave's and victor's burial-place.

Ask of the God whose shining guise
Is as a light where lights are none,
Whose glittering wand and gracious eyes
Are infinitely more than sun

To ghosts afraid, bewildered, sad,
In downward tracks, with rocks up-piled,
Who flock towards the patient, glad
Herald of souls, Hermes the mild.

Ask of thy smiling guardian-god,
Claim answer ere the light wax dim—

.

Respondet Hermes.

“ Somewhere for thee green grows the sod,
Already of thy funeral-hymn

“ Strains on the voice of wind and wave
Uncaptured float, and wait thine end ;
Think not thy father’s name can save
Or thy known prowess can befriend.

“ Behold, I lift my wand, whose sight
Already with prophetic awe
Doth thy untutored spirit smite
And chasten to its own vague law.

“ Thou too ere long shalt own its sway ;
Thou too shalt soon, nor thou alone,
Child of Achilles, take thy way
To fiery swamps of Phlegethon.”

SONNET.

My earth-bound Muse must trail her miry wing,
As some immured linnet 'gainst her bars
Still beats her downy plumes and strives to sing,
And, failing there, wails sadly to the stars :
The stars, unpitying, hold their aery course,
And wheel in flamy-axled crew along,
They do condemn a woodland songster hoarse
Who pours from copse a wild, untuneful song.
The meads are pranked with splendour, and the sun
Flings lavish gold around in glittering boon,
Yet never I from Phœbus gold have won
To put mine own base-metalled lyre in tune,
And I, until the god inspires my strain,
The purlieu of Parnassus haunt in vain.

QUATRAINS.

RESTHARROW.

PIED Restharrow ! Where these stubb'd blossoms
 sprout
The sickle stays, the coulter must refrain.
With this low hedge the Faery Queen shuts out
All swink and traffic from her hushed domain.

ROOTED PLEASURE.

ABOUT this joy some dim memorial clings
Of ancient grief ; as on the barrow's crest,
Still mindful of the slaughtered Dane, upsprings
The Pasqueflower, with the red blood in its breast.*

THE MARRIAGE OF THAMES AND MEDWAY.

SUMMON the Nereids that on dolphins ride,
With mellow sounding conch and horn supplied,
Deep-voiced, through the high-shouldered, furrowed
 sea,
To lift an hymenæal harmony.

* See note on page 4.

And Other Poems.

A STAGE DIRECTION.

“ STRIKE Music ! ” But the world’s harsh clamour
soon
Will drown it, though the Muse herself should cry ;
As clouds at midnight seize upon the moon
(Figuring the rape of Proserpine thereby).

THE ROSE-BUSH.

THE Rosebush flaunts to sun and wind’s caress
Its hymenæal pomp of loveliness.
Meantime a rarer beauty deathly grows
Where Heliodora sleeps beneath the rose.

SHADOWS TWAIN.

WITHIN God’s acre grows the yew ; thereby
The leaden-stepping Hours* forbear to fly.
Sunlight and breeze the shadow at whiles lift hence,
But leave a darker curtain in suspense.

* Milton “ On Time.”

“IN MEMORY OF W. V.”*

WOULD that our strength could march with our
desire !

Then in the night which gathers round thy head
Love for a torch should hang, a ring of fire
To scare the dark from our belovèd Dead.

W. V. respondet ex umbra.

Behold, your strength *has* marched with your desire,
And in the night that touches not my fame
Love for a torch shall hang, a ring of fire
To scare the dark from my belovèd name.

* By William Canton.

THE LAGGARD.

FROM off the russet boughs I broke
A withering garland of wild oak,
And wandered, fancifully crowned,
That leaf about my forehead bound,

Alone, amid the falling gloam,
Across the autumn landscape home,
Bearing dark brows and careful eyes
Wreathed o'er in that fantastic wise.

O fitting act for one whose will
From higher scenes turns backward still !
The man who longs, 'mid light of God,
The darkness where his fathers trod,

Who twilight loves above the sun——
How think ye, friends, of such an one ?
What should a pagan poet wear,
But autumn oak, about his hair ?

A RESURRECTION.

My old-time self whom I slew,
Yet left unburied a space,
Crept from his corpse and stood up
A ghost before my face ;

Spoke of the ache that lasted,
Now, though the life was done,
Of the shame and pain that were his
Unburied, to lie in the sun.

Pleaded the love that was his
Once, from the heart that was mine,
And the sinful memories
That linked our lives in line.

Prayed me, for pity's sake,
To lift him in from the cold,
Bade my kindness awake
And flow to him, now, as of old.

Then, for him I remembered
Merry and blithe of yore,
" Perchance I would do it," I said,
" If thou couldst come as before."

" Laughter and quip and jest,
These couldst thou bring ? " I said.
" Nay," he answered, " I bring
Only myself that am dead."

Then, for I saw my task
Had lain this while undone,
For slaying him righteously,
I had left him to lie in the sun.

I burnt the corpse and buried
Fathoms away from sight,
That the ghost might have peace that had seen
Its obsequies done aright.

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

EACH cornered stone, each thorn shall sting
Thy tortured feet to bleed afresh.
To every jagged point shall cling
Some morsel of thy flesh.

In torment of thy hottest noon
The taciturn, unfeeling sky
Shall beat thy limbs to flag and swoon,
And bring thee near to die.

No rock, no bush shall bless thy sight
With lure of shelter for awhile
From flaunting glare of ghastly light
That paints each hideous mile.

And when the way behind is cast
And thou canst well the gates perceive,
Requital of thy laboured past,
Red in thy latest eve.

The bliss for which thou didst forswear
Thy once much-cherished vanity,
For all thy sacrifice and care
Perchance is not for thee.

The veriest phantom of a town
May dance before thy cheated gaze,
Or thou at last mayst wander down
Into forbidden ways.

TYRANNUS SUI.

HE martyred at the self-same stake
Both Faith and Love for Truth's sweet sake,
And as some cone, though capped with snow,
Bowell'd with writhing fires below,
Beneath a wan, cold face he bore
A nature tortured to its core.
The passions which beset his soul
Brake never through the fierce control
Which shewed a part, but masked the whole.
Hope in a captive leash he held,
And Fear's rebellions sternly quelled,
Until to outward view at length
He stood in self-sufficient strength,
Who in his chambered being's hold
As paramount denizen controlled
The traitors who were fierce of old.

Yet, as a thousand thoughts begin
Their stifled parliament within,
When the mild night's maternal sway
Emancipates, and tears away
The stern proscription of the day,
First awed and hushed, then gathering tone,
Till to a fierce insistence grown,
So whispers grim at times would fall
On the stark silence of that hall,
Whispers, God knows, of tortured hosts,
Some living still, some long since ghosts,
Whispers which rose to scream and shout
Flat blasphemy and treason out,

Till that rebellious babel filled
Each corner of the courts it thrilled,
While brushing Shapes, that bore no form,
Would from forgotten crannies swarm,
A hideous rout, with mocking cry
And laughter as they rustled by,
Shapes greatly daring, bold to peer
Into the face now chilled with fear,
Whose touch, though lifted as it pressed,
Seared like white iron the shrinking breast,
And like a biting tremor passed
Through the poor soul that cowered aghast.

O, had ye only seen him then,
Seen as he was this man of men,
Beleaguered, every egress locked,
A raving captive, caged and mocked,
Though Lord of Walls, within them known
A tyrant foiled and overthrown,
Ye would have cast no word of hate
At those proud lips, that upright gait,
Nor dared to front with hostile brow
Those masking eyes, whose silent glow
Lay like some tarn, whose darkened breast
Is cover to a vast unrest,
Seeming to say nor less to hide
All is not well beneath its tide,
From whose far depths, with tossing surge,
A tortured spirit might emerge.
O had ye known him thus, and seen
What lurked behind that iron mien,
With little heart for hate and ire,
Only with pity set afire,
Ye would have cast this brother's care
At the great Mother's knees in prayer.

Beseeching, for her woman's part
Our Lady of the Stricken Heart
On these worn lids her peace t' impress,
Oblivion of the old distress,
The sleep-in-life from which the soul
Wakes like a child, renewed and whole,
Or to seal up that shuddering breath
With God's great second gift of death.

THE ACT OF FAITH.

OF strife of chieftain and of king,
Of warring lands let others sing ;
Let others priests and poets choose—
Here is far other theme, O Muse.
See how this heretic sublime,
Exulting in his impious crime,
Moves with calm eyes and quiet breath,
As to some house of prayer, to death.

Their manacles are all too slight
To chain the soul's elusive might,
Nor can their racks and stakes amaze
His visage, set in Godward gaze.
These childish implements of hate
Disturb not his transcendent state,
And he can front with face unbowed
The insensate rancour of the crowd.

Stript and erect he faces death,
His playfellow from earliest breath.
Met have they many a time before,
This at the worst is one bout more.
And though, unlike the conflicts past,
This bring triumph to death at last,
Yet, sorely struck, the grisly king
Will but a shamefast victory wring.

Now for the end his soul makes firm
At fiery finish of his term,
Sustains the flesh, that fears the flame
Yet would not such a partner shame.
Lord ! since Thy love this thing hath wrought,
Stand close within his dying thought,
And lift above this blood-red haze
The city of his brightening gaze !

THE RUNAWAY.

SHE ran behind a door as I came by her
(She thought I would not spy her),
Though whether to pounce forth and to surprise,
Or only hoping cover from my eyes,
I know not. But with stealthy foot I crept,
Then round the doorway stept
And caught her, as she cried :
“ I knew you'd find me. O you are too smart ! ”

Dear child, there is no spot where you could hide,
Though God has made this universe so wide,
No nook so secret but my questing heart,
In missing you bereft of half its shine,
Would seek you and by instinct sure divine ;
If only by the light you cast about,
Track to your hiding place and bring you out.

VIATOR ET SENEX.

- Viator. By this path, if a man straight onward keep,
Is't giv'n to reach Elysium ?
- Senex. Even so.
But tell me truly, thither wouldst thou go ?
- Viator. For that same goal I give away my sleep.
- Senex. Consider now ! The way is far and steep.
- Viator. A thing it but inflames desire to know.
- Senex. Yet shouldst thou fail—how bitter then thy
woe !
- Viator. I shall not fail. For if I sow I reap.
- Senex. Yet failed has many a pilgrim heretofore.
- Viator. Through lack of care.
- Senex. 'Tis aye the way of youth
To mock the valiant men that went before !
- Viator. I mock them not.
- Senex. Well, falter not, O friend,
But push through ever dark'ning ways uncouth.
May all good gods go with thee to that end !

ODE ON A PICTURE.

O DAUNTLESS swimmer in a perilous tide,
Beneath an overhanging billow's brow,
Seeing around the uncongealed snow
That flanks the eddying swirl on every side,
Much cause indeed hast thou,
Brave heart, for faintness ! Lo ! All flight denied,
The long wave holds the driftwood in its hand !
Only God knows what moment it shall fall
And toss thy lifeless body to the sand.—
Yet, if God please, it shall not strike at all.

Surely, since mortal, 'neath that threatening wave
Long hadst thou fall'n, unless thou'rt armed indeed
With that same flower against thy desperate need,
Goodly to look upon, potent to save,
Which, as the old legends read,
Cyllenian Hermes to Ulysses gave,
That bloom which after grew in heavenly bower
And strengthened Dorothea, the patient maid,
Then to Theophilus, in promised hour,
Mingled with fruit, brought unexpected aid.

Still struggle on, brave swimmer ! Even thou,
Thou, and none other, shalt o'ercome at last,
Yea, thou thyself, the watery peril past,
Shalt enter in with an untroubled brow,
All fear behind thee cast
Ev'n with the peril, both being over now.
Yea, thou that many days hast followed after
The light which leads to the celestial zone,
Hearing no more the water-wraith's wild laughter,
But hearkening to a choir of deeper tone,

First of that singing host who in dire fight,
Or ever to high festival they came,
Drove legion'd Hell, that sought in vain their shame,
Beneath the cloudy canopy of night ;
Who in the same dear Name
Triumphed, and strove towards the same dear light ;
First of this conquering pageant thou shalt stride
Who from the desert marches' sharp assays
Through this last bitter water's baffled tide
Attained the City of thy steadfast gaze.

THE DRIFTING NEST.

SEE how these halcyons float at ease
On the rough bosom of the seas,
Rocked by the stormy winds that blow
And urge the driftwood to and fro
Yet fail to hurt the birds, who rest
Secure within their tiny nest,
And, though in seeming jeopardy, ride
Unwet above the scalding tide.

So I, who likewise bear the gale,
In this poor ark, my body frail,
And, tossed about by wind and wave,
Can see no hand to catch and save,
Am kept by presences that are
Invisible and tutelar,
And whitherward my hopes are set
Hope thorough every bar to get.

NAZARENICS.

THE BAPTIST.

MANY the martyrs unto whom Death came
 Beneath the open, sympathetic skies,
 Before the multitude's admiring eyes—
 Wonderful Death, who slew the mortal frame,
 Requiting with an everlasting fame,
 Wherever men are bound by human ties,
 The soul that gave its best a sacrifice,
 Even the life, for Truth's white, burning name.

Not so, this prisoner. Lo, the greatest son
 Of woman, free no more as when he trod
 Where Jordan drives his lustral waters on.
 A step, a creaking hinge, and into the gloom
 Death strides, and the strong spirit has fled the
 room •
 Along the darkened passages to God.

JOHN IN PRISON.

"But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, *added yet this above all*, that he shut up John in prison."—LUKE III, 19, 20.

STRONG Christ of God, Sun whose victorious
beams

Have put my tiny candle on the wane !
Rise on my soul ! Shine in, Thou light of God !
Yet first, because Thou hast not left alone
Thy cousin and forerunner, I give Thee praise
No less than at Thy Father's throne thy Spirits
Acclaim Thee, God made man—they in the
height,

And in my noisome depth of dungeon I.
But come again, Messiah ! for unto Thee
Staple, and chains that chafe these festering
limbs,

Iron rod and bar that knit the massy gate
Between me and the light I love, are vain
As are the mists that mantle on the hills
Before the inflow of the widening morn.
Lo ! how I waver ! I, that saw Thee late,
O Light in darkness, gracious as the moon
New-ris'n 'mid thronging damp, that saw and
heard

And from Thee took the mandate to endure
Sole to the world's confusion, in despite
Of all whose malice sought in me, its slave,
To foil the marching kingdom ! Lord, forgive !
Yet come, before these chains that bite the flesh
Pierce to the spirit. Let me see and know.

O let the dark fall from Thee, and the scales
That shut my blinded sight and keep Thee hid !
Speak, art Thou here ? It may be For mine
eyes,

Once quick to search all coverts, now with fumes
And rising vapours clouded, wax infirm,
Too weak to find Thy presence. Or dost Thou
now,

In circuit of the Galilean hills,
Where many waters gather, call the tribes
To test of sifting wind and purging fire,
And baptism of the Spirit, forgetting John ?
Remember, Lord ! Nay, let *me* call to mind !
Three weeks since, when my fever and my pain
Had made me madder than now, most miserable,
Forsaken of my God, I thought, and Thee
My kinsman whom I loved, because my soul,
Prophetic, knew in Thee that day to which I
Was but the faint, first streak of ushering light,
I sent for two I loved, for two that still
Clung to their master. And because a thought,
More than all outward sorrows, burnt within,
Peopling my sleep with dreams insane, with roads
Thronged with all mocking voices, roads which
shot

By sudden, jagged precipices to Hell,
I bade them seek and ask Thee " Art Thou He
Whom all our questionings cry for, all our hopes
Gather towards ? Or look we for another,
Groping in dark the darker now because
We deemed it light so lately ? "

Then they went
And left me to my madness, till again
They sought my presence, and when I bade them
tell :

“ What said the Rabbi ? ” spake “ We found Him
 thronged,
 And, hardly forcing access, gave thy word ;
 Whereat He answered not, but for a space
 Bade us attend. And in that hour He cleansed
 A multitude diseased, the cancerous breast
 And limbs devoured by leprosy restored,
 Strengthened the halt, flooded the groping eyes
 With light and bade them see. Then spake again :
 ‘ Go now ; what ye have seen and heard tell
 John.’ ”

This when I learnt, remembrance of the past,
 Of God’s great angel-herald ere my birth
 Meting my path before me, of the days
 Wherethrough I served by Jordan and a voice,
 Not man, but voice incarnate, ere the Christ
 Came, rang before His presence ; of all this,
 And of that morn by Jordan when Himself
 Stooped to my baptism and from Heav’n drew
 down

To Him, our Christ, the witness of our God ;
 Memory of what was then, of all I hoped
 In Him, my Lord and cousin, for whom I lived,
 Yea, and now die ; memory of this, and thought
 Of now, when to the Kingdom’s portals flock
 The radiant peoples, ransomed and redeemed,
 While I, the herald who, ere the East grew gray,
 Discerned the conquering sun, I who of all,
 (Not of this fickle multitude I, His slave,
 Friend and forerunner), longed for no high place,
 But, standing by, to watch and know the King,
 Glad in His triumph to triumph, myself forgot,
 Proud but to see and hear, now doomed to die,
 Here chained where rats and noisome damps in-
 vade,

Far from my Sun, and the dear light of Heaven,
The desert spaces, and the blue, ribbed hills,
And rushing Jordan, green with reed and palm,—
What with my grief and my disease, I grew
Mad, mad ! O God ! it were as if one should
Be crucified in sunlight, seeing the sky
Bright over insect, bird, and flower, each leaf
Glad in the fountain'd radiance, all this world,
This brave, good world in its rejoicing round,
And only he to have no part in it
But hang aloof, helplessly placed at gaze,
One streaming agony !

And with the thought
I cried ere I was 'ware, and turned my face,
And wailing in my hands I beat the wall.
O God ! God ! God ! am I not John, Thy slave,
Glad of Thy bidding, glad to serve Thy Christ,
And yet forsaken here ?

But as I wept,
The Master of my sorrows, He whose hand
Could cleanse, if so He would, could heal and
calm,
Redeem or leave in anguish, visited me.
He came not 'as He came when free I trod,
Unfettered as the winds that beat their way,
Bridging all seas ; but on my head a hand,
Light as of old my mother's when I, rough lad,
Softened beneath her touch, grew gentle with her,
Came, or I dreamt it came, and in the thought
So pleasing drowned my sorrow ; and a voice,
Falling like spring's warm showers, addressed by
name.

This also passed into my dream, this too
Built up the pleasing fancy, and I grew calm
Once more beside my mother as I prayed.

Then the voice breathed again, and yet again :
" John ! " and I looked and saw Him standing
there,

Pale in the dungeon gloom, with forehead racked,
Furrowed with anguish. But His eyes were
kind ;

The twilight of the world was in those eyes,
Which shone with sorrow as a lake with depth.
And when I met their mild, compassionate pain,
I was a child once more, forgot my griefs,
My cramps and agues, sores and stone forgot,
Even my failing eyesight in this den,
Amerced of God's good light, and broke in sobs,
Weeping for very gladness. He, my Friend,
Spake never word nor checked me but stood
there,

Gentle and still till I found voice to cry :
" O Christ, that Thou hadst come ! Didst Thou
not know—

Yea, for Thou knowest all—my pain and grief,
Here, robbed of light and air, where rats by dark
Gnaw at my naked soles which rot with damp ?
Yet all is well, since Thou hast come in time
To lead me to the light ! " •

A flood of pain

Flushed over that kind cheek, and in those eyes
Welled up and overbrimmed ; praying, I thought,
He covered with His hands His face, and turned,
Veiled from my fevered look a silent space ;
Then answered " John, I may not lead thee forth.
Nay, do not speak ; I know ; I know it all."
And, when I could have sobbed afresh, that hand
Quieted as a child and kept me calm,
So that I placed my hands in His and knelt,
Bowing my head before Him. Then He spake :

"Nay, John, I know it all, thy shame and pain.
Thou say'st thy feet are gnawed and worn away.
I know it, ay, have felt it. See my own!"

And, when I looked, even as mine they were,
Rotting, and bitten, foul. The Lord spake on :
"Wherever among earth's children one of these
My brothers suffers wrong, the smart goes home
Here on my body and the mark lives here,
Though none has ever seen it ; thou hast seen.
There was a slave girl scourged but yesternight,
One who had done no sin ; behold my back."

And foul it was with clotted runs of blood.
Still He spake on : "The Kingdom moves apace,
Nor have I any of all that call me Lord
Can render to the Kingdom and to Me
Such service as thou canst. For thou art John,
Called from the womb and holy ; thou hast borne
A labour not forgotten, O be sure,
But storied with the Father, thine and Mine.
Be sure I know thee well-beloved of God,
Remembered in this sorrow. O my friend,
My cousin whom I love as thou lov'st Me,
Before my Father's throne this morn arose
Rumours of earth and questioning who could
stand

The Kingdom's martyr. And thy name was held
As one that should not waver, could not fail
Nor falter as the many, but be still
Stedfast above all peril, and in faith
Immovable toward God, although He slay.
O thou art loved, be sure, thy service known.
But yet—what if the Kingdom by thy death,
Rotting within this dungeon, profit more
Than by thy life without, could'st thou not
die?"

John in Prison

My eye gave answer, and He spake again :
" I may not tell thee all, nor know I all.
But turn thy gaze, and wait, and thou shalt see,
Nor shalt forget for ever. For who that knows
The vision or the voice that falls therewith
Has sight or hearing, save for that emprise
And tireless traffic on these shores of time
Whereby the Father draws unto Himself
A people sanctified, apart from sin ?
But first behold Myself ! "

And when I looked,
His hands were jagged and stripped, and through
the flesh

A hole ran black, while from His side there fell
Drops from a yawning fissure. I wept to see.
Then in the dungeon voices rose, and came
Eyes that I knew not, faces thronged the wall
In flickering passage, bright against the gloom
One moment ere they faded. Things I saw
Not now remembered, though the mind burns yet
Still unforgetful, restless and aflame.
But strife I saw, the rise and clash of spears,
Stark onset and the beat of sword on sword,
And death amid the tumult, death where fell
The rain of arrows ; death not here alone,
But in the fire triumphant, and in pain
That brake the body lifting up to God
A face transfigured as the sunlight streamed
From out the city and the enthroned Love
Whereby this sorrow came. And still through all,
Whatever tumult waxed o'er that which waned,
Fordone ere that which followed it, I heard
The one, clear music of the coming King,
Clamant above all tongues. And ever moved,
Most amid fellest deeds, a light that shone

On pale, brave faces, pausing on the brow
Of faces pinched and wan, of faces proud
But greatly humble, in the light they bore
Transfigured like their Lord's ; and still in these,
In holy deed by sickbed, or in cot
Or brawling city, in souls that home to God
Sped from the sword or furnace, I beheld
The one brave Face bearing the wrong and ever
Suffering in these His servants. Last of all
He prophesied my own release at hand,
And when He went, despite my fever and pain,
My heart burnt on within me, and this den
Grew brighter than the desert spaces are,
Because I knew Him coming, and His hand
Already beckoning, like a dawn in power,
When the keen breeze puts by the rack and
Heav'n
Flushes with expectation.

So I dreamed,

And whilst I dreamt was happy with myself
As is a child who feigns a secret his
Whereof none else may share and with grave eyes,
Glad with their burden, goes about his play,
Yea, bears with chafe and chiding for the sake
Of this redress, so sure, so rich in balm
And healing of the aching, piteous past.
But then the days dragged by, and I grew sad,
Lying still here, when no release was giv'n
And He, my Lord, came not. My running sore
Gathered fresh head and with disease and pain
I grew most miserable. That He would come !
Through these cramped limbs I feel the fever
creep.

Nay, shall I see the light again ? My God !
Hast Thou not giv'n Thy word ? Am I not John ?

Lord, have I failed Thy purpose, or in deed
 Or speech unfaithful, as of old was one,
 Thy champion, by a lustful woman snared,
 Shorn of his strength, and justly for his sin
 Blinded, the Gentiles' sport, the captive held
 Of brutish gods, and in Philistia made
 A gazing-stock? Make trial, and find me now
 Thy servant through all sorrow, waiting still
 Till Thou redeemest Israel. Speak, and save!
 God, that release would come!

*(In the dungeon beh^old the Christ stand. He
 speaks :)*

“ John, I am here.

Be patient. glad. The end is come. Thou goest,
 Still my forerunner, meting still the path
 Myself must tread hereafter, home to God
 Now by a way of shameful, steep access.
 Brief space, Myself will follow. Gird thyself.
 One comes, executor from the lustful king,
 Charged for thy death. My cousin, take this
 hand.

The dusk falls on the desert, and the night
 Is armed with healing wind and lit with stars,
 Bringing thee home from travail. Speak no word.
 I know't, nor witness, save these shining eyes,
 Require to read thy purpose, know thy mind.
 I will not leave thee now, but to the end
 Stay by thee, though unseen. Speak not! 'Tis
 well

Trust Me, and fear not. Thou art ready now.”

PHEIDIPPIDES.

WHAT ! run the race again ? Ay, if Zeus would !
 Gladly, to feel the lessening distance draw
 Me to my Athens, whilst my forehead throbbed
 To the cool pulsing of the chafing breeze.
 Then at the end to die, and dying, know
 I died—for Athens ? Ay ! But more—for Him.
 He said 't whose word I dare believe for truth.

O friends ! Ye know my story ? How I ran
 Twice for my country, twice, and at the first
 In the wet concave of a cavern met
 Pan ? So they say. Not Pan—an idle tale.
 Not Pan. Nay, hearken ! Such a tale is mine
 As never runner's yet.

Ye know me, friends,
 Pheidippides, the racer, Pheres' son.
 Ye know my life ; and since my sire was poor,
 Sca-faring Pheres, I, whose gifts were none
 Save this strong body, like a god's for speed,
 For pelf and prizes ran, and nursed each limb
 Up to its swift perfection. But Dion spake,
 The old, lame onion-seller of the town,
 The old lame man I loved and, meeting whom,
 I bore his basket up the rugged ways ;
 " Thou yet shalt run for Athens ; ay, and more.
 For not for nought Zeus gave this peerless gift,
 This strong, swift body." So I lived and ran,
 First in the wrestle and in gymnasium first :
 No part of all the day but knew me well
 For strength and speed, whether with dawn I rose
 And, battling with the waves beside the coast,

Rode like a Nereid, or upon the heights
Challenged the boisterous winds, and under stars
And all the silver canopy of heaven
Hunted the beasts, swifter by far than they,
Stronger and thereto skilled, no other roof
Shelter save that same arch 'neath which I sped
Nights balmy and clear when, vast in heaven afar,
White clouds revolved through wastes of dark'ning
blue

Where the ecstatic lightning danced at whiles.
For even then some god that loved me well,
Marking me of the people and a name
Nowise illustrious from my sires, imbreathed
So high presentiment, prophetic hope,
That all my thought to deeds heroic ran,
Thoughts of the great of old, of all I knew
Storied along our countryside, of names
Rightly renowned, Protesilaus that leapt
The destined martyr, Pylades no less
Victim in will to save his friend from death,
Theseus whose dauntless valour for his land
The monstrous tribute raised, Achilles famed,
Patroclus, Hector, Zeus-born Heracles,
Jason and Agamemnon, names revered ;
Heroes that through the dusty march of life
Moved with erect, bright brows, and eyes that
strove

Ever to scale the azure tops and draw
To their weak thoughts rare fancies that had grown
Stern with strange beauty from familiar stay
And ancient sojourn where th' encircling hills
Into their everlasting chalice drained
The rivulets of Heav'n : saviours of men,
Now and for evermore rightly renowned,
Rightly by bards beloved of Phœbus sung

And rightly to the sounding lyre extolled,
No knights of idle tale, as some now deem
(Erring through wisdom vague), and fable dark,
But men who, to the piteous needs of men
Moving as brothers might, were glad of call
To labour and, if Zeus so willed, to die.
Such then as these I loved, and worshipped these ;
And, though I feared my lot, so vile, obscure,
No king of men as these, a runner hired,
Selling my limbs for bread, my powers for pelf,
Natheless I prayed, if Zeus so found me fit,
I too might run for Athens, I no less
Myself as for a sacrifice might fling
To save my folk.

O friends, my tale is known !
Mark now the grace o' the gods, who knew my
prayer,
And answered to the uttermost ! Came the Mede,
Coasting for Attica, and brought on board
Hippias our banished tyrant ; then fell word
To me, Pheidippides, to haste and run,
Craving the aid of Sparta : how I ran,
How surely and how swiftly, and, being there,
How greatly foiled, ye know. But not the end !
May Zeus be thanked ! for this was not the end.
But back o'er Parnes as I ran there lay
Aslant the path a bouldered chasm, of old
Famed the resort of nymphs. With slackening feet,
As loth to wrong whoever haunted there,
I loitered past, with downdropt hands and gaze
Fain to fall elsewhere nor pierce the shrine
Of resting Deity, perchance of him
The Master of our mountains (since thus named,
So call him Pan), although no Attic Power,
Known of Arcadian shepherds the great Dread,

Nor less throughout Thessalia held in awe.
Wherefore with timid foot that feared to haste
Fain had I passed, nor dared to look within
Save with an eye scarce lifted e'er it fell
To earth, how vainly ! Fell to lift again,
Nor wander now.

For there sat One within
Who drew me with a glance beneath his will,
And beckoned, that with reverent step I came.
He spake :

“ So friend, you thought to pass, nor pause
In honour to this cave's dread habitant.
Grow ye thus slack towards divinity
In Athens ? How then hope to slay the Mede,
Unless ye bind the host of Heav'n to aid,
Your right good lords ? Yet fear not, since from
men

I seek not worship. There is One, be sure,
(Hereafter to be known, not dimly seen,
As now, in driving suns traverse the sky,
In moon and flocking stars, in falling fires),
Who seeks my honour, since with His the same.
Return, tell Athens that the cause is hers,
Hers in despite of home-bred treason's hate,
The myriad Mede, and Hellas' little love.
Reck not of Sparta. Broken reeds must fail,
And well if sooner, that your hands may find
Support more sure. But of thyself I speak,
Thy land's best runner, spending now thy strength
In others' stead ! Ask of the gods in Me,
Ask of the gods, and choose, since worthy found,
What most allures thee ? ”

So He spake and smiled,
Marking my travail ; for to hear this word
My spirit leapt within me, and the blood,

Surging, so at my temples beat and throbbed,
No speech I found, since here I knew fulfilled
The years' long vision. Thus I thought, then cried :
" Since Sparta fails us, let my life be given,
Yea, let me fall a sacrifice, so the gods
Be to our arms propitious ! "

" Nay, what need ? "

Came answer. " Spake I not, ' the cause is yours ? '
Athens shall conquer. Then for this thy life,
Brighter amid the glow of victory, choose
And have what boon most pleases."

But I spake,

Anguished because the hope grew less, and failed
When most in expectation :

" O my Lord,

Refuse me not. Nay, take my life, and grant
Victory, but not without my blood, so shed,
So given, that the triumph evermore
May with my name be knit, and men may know
Not only heroes and the kings of men
Love to the death and perish for their folk ! "

Not now He smiled, but drew athwart His brow
A hand, how torn I know not, since such pain
Befalls not gods, unless perchance were here
Prometheus, bearing still, though of the wrath
Of Zeus now free, the marks of that stern watch,
Nailed through the palms to stony Caucasus.
But dripping blood He drew it, and I saw,
Not noted sooner, round His head a crown
Far other than the fillets, wov'n of flowers,
Fresh leaves, and buds sweet-scented, for the brows
Of Pan amid the snow-capped, circling hills
Arcadian. Here was crown none bare before,
Nor shall hereafter, since of thorns, and driv'n,

Steel-fanged, into the aching brows, above
 Eyes that I dared not face, although I knew them
 Kind to the uttermost, nay, filled with tears,
 If so a god may weep.

He spake : " 'Tis well.

Thou hast thy will. Yet look to run again,
 Nor in that race lack fellow, since alone,
 By God unholpen, none could bear a boon
 As this so mighty."

Bold I grew and cried :

" Let not my Lord be angered if I crave
 His name whose grace fulfils me, or if Pan
 (As some surmise him haunter of these heights)
 Or, as I judge, by wounded hands and brows
 Painfully stricken, that heroic fame
 Of titan-panged Prometheus."

" Wherefore crave

A knowledge more than lawful, or enquire
 Beyond what to thy just concern belongs ?
 Pan or Prometheus, call me as thou wilt,
 Nor err so doing." Thus He spake, nor seemed
 Angered in aught, but smiling bade me haste
 To those that looked to see my due return.
 So from that cave and Presence Athens-ward
 I fled, light-hearted, for a word was mine
 That warmed me through the biting wind, and held
 me

Through stub and heath and over stony ways,
 Till the blue, dancing waters that I loved
 And City of the Gray-eyed Maid I saw.

O friends, what need to speak of what ye know ?
 The strife whereby the Fennel-field became
 The camping ground of Victory, unto us
 Victory but to the Persian Nemesis ?

The mountains stern with serried spears, the poise
And downward rush to battle, and the last
Fell slaughter where the beached galleys stood
And the barbarian closed about his gear,
Striving amid the ooze and breaking waves ?
Here, too, set in the flash and fall of swords
I bore a part (whereof my tribe-folk yet
Keep memory) not ignoble, for my mind
Thought on Protesilaus, how he fell,
First from the galleys beached ; perchance the gods
Would grant me honour otherwise to fall
First on the Median vessels, ere the night
Under her shadow drew the flying sails.
So hoped I, erring ; for the battle closed
And found me whole, unstruck of any hurt,
Not knowing how the god could keep His word.
When lo ! a clamouring voice : "Pheidippides !
Pheidippides to Athens ! Make them sure,
Our wives and sisters, that the day is ours."

And with the passion of that glorious morn
I gathered heart, though wearied, cast aside
My shield and buckler, for the course was mine,
My race to Athens. So I rose and ran,
The proud blood mounting in me as I passed
The Fennel-field, the slaughtered Medes, and those,
Though few, my own dear comrades, in the fight
Fallen victorious, evermore to bear
The title of that day to which all days,
Each age that shall befall, must tribute bring
Of honour, crowning these with name withal
" Strivers at Marathon."

But as I ran,
Shod with a speed I knew not, far beyond
All swiftness mine, I came aware of One

Who paced beside me, paced with even stride,
 My comrade, and I knew Him for a god,
 So beautiful of limb, so swift of step,
 Though in His radiant progress tracked with blood,
 Suffering with every print. Then on my soul
 Came vision of the cave on Parnes' side,
 The god amid the heather, and of His word
 Mysterious came remembrance, how He spake
 I should not lack for fellow when I ran
 My race with Death. Now knew I whence He spake,
 And knew my end at hand, and with the thought
 Glowed yet the deeper glory in my soul.
 Thus would I die, thus would I grave my name,
 Pheidippides the Runner, far within
 The love and memory of the folk I saved,
 One with the Heroes, and the Lives that flashed
 A momentary splendour, as a fire
 That leaps to perish, fed with sacrifice
 Of quickening incense. Swifter grew my stride,
 Nearer the city, and a mist arose
 Robbing mine eyes, but through the darkness
 loomed

A mighty pageant of advancing towers,
 Of marching walls and folk that sat thereon,
 Of thronging peoples in the streets ; a hum
 Filled up mine ears and shut them from all sound
 Save His, my comrade's, as He spake :

“ Rejoice !

Good cheer, Pheidippides, the race is won !
 Behold the city gates.”

I saw and knew.

He spake again :

“ I take this life, the cost
 Of such a conquest, and a sacrifice
 Such as the High Gods reverence, since a boon

Freely surrendered for the hearths and homes,
Temples and tombs, the fireside happiness
Of gods and men, since mortal and divine
Here best commingle. Lo ! thy promised gift,
O Martyr-Runner ! ”

Then a shout arose,
And some there were who seized my hand and cried :
“ What of the battle ? Speak, Pheidippides ! ”
And as night thickened round me, walls and towers
Swaying together, and beneath my feet
Earth rocking rose and fell, I gasped . “ Rejoice !
We conquer.”

So His word came true that spake
Myself my country's saviour and by death
Their joyful victim, as the folk know well,
Knowing that in his convoy Hermes drew
No prouder soul nor one more greatly glad,
More prompt towards the ferry, less afraid
To tread the downward path, nor needing less
Waft of the lulling rod, since joyed to go
Erect to Hades, cowering not, a soul
Not fugitive, because I bore in death
The boon I craved, and gloried having won,
His boon whose name I know not, mine as mark
Of the High Gods' compassion and a love
Such as of old they bare unto their Seed
Heroic. Bright in death at Hermes' side
Glittered my fate, a star ; still on my brow,
Whatever gusts with travelling years arise,
It keeps its station, set to send its ray
Far down the paths of Time for evermore.

NOTE TO PHEIDIPPIDES.

" *Great Pan*, is Christ, the very God of all shepherds, which calleth himselfe the greates, and good shepherd. The name is most rightly (methinkes) applyed to him ; for Pan signifieth all, or omnipotent, which is onely the Lord Jesus. And by that name (as I remember) he is called of Eusebius, in his fift booke *De Preparat. Evang.*, who thereof telleth a proper storye to that purpose. Which story is first recorded of Plutarch, in his booke of the ceasing of Oracles : and of Lavatere translated, in his booke of walking sprights ; who sayth, that about the same time that our Lord suffered his most bitter passion, for the redemption of man, certein passengers sayling from Italy to Cyprus, and passing by certaine Iles called Paxae, heard a voyce calling alowde Thamus, Thamus ! (now Thamus was the name of an Ægyptian, which was Pilote of the ship) who, giving care to the cry, was bidden, when he came to Palodes, to tel that the great Pan was dead : which he doubting to doe, yet for that when he came to Palodes, there sodeinly was such a calme of winde, that the shippe stode still in the sea unmoved, he was forced to cry alowd, that Pan was dead : wherewithall there was heard suche piteous outcryes, and dreadfull shriking, as hath not bene the like. By whych Pan, though of some be understoode the great Satanas, whose kingdome at that time was by Christ conquered, the gates of hell broken up, and death by death delivered to eternall death, (for at that time as he sayth, all Oracles surceased, and enchanted spirits that were wont to delude the people, thenceforth held theyr peace :) and also at the demand of the Emperoure Tiberius, who that Pan should be, answere was made him by the wisest and best learned, that it was the sonne of Mercurie and Penelope : yet I thinke it more properly meant of the death of Christ, the onely and very Pan, then suffering for his flock."—SPENSER, *The Shepherds Calendar*, Glosse to Maye.

SALVATORS.

LOVE'S FUGITIVE.

If mad with sense of sin, I should not dare
Towards Thy proffered grace to lift an eye,
But, cowering from myself and Thee, should fly :
Yea, if, Love's fugitive, in vague despair
I made my bed in hell, yet wouldst Thou still
Track out the restless wanderer from Thy will,
With sweet, pursuing ministries of grace
The exile of the universe thither chase.
Whither, from Heavenly Love's all-searching sight,
Could the vain recusant from a Father's face
Through realms well-charted, strait, take hopeless
flight,
When every faithless wind would garrulous grow,
Swift to betrayal, and every stone a tongue
Would shout my name the babbling hills among ?
Nay, ev'n though in unwonted compact these
Kept peace awhile, Omniscience, that all seas
And of the heavens th' innumerable throng
Orders, of every wave and star aware,
Stooping to knowledge of each spark and mote,
Love's waif, however hid, would surely note,
As the great light, that sweeps through seas of
space,
Both knows and finds the violet's hiding-place.

LOVE'S FREEDMAN.

IN youth I loved each covert, glade, and hill :
Now, though the White Christ wooed and bade me
 hence,
A happy pagan still,
I glory in every sylvan excellence,
Proud if the wind but fan me, glad to hear
The revelling tempest in its fierce career,
I can exult, while every dancing vein
Beats in mad answer to the pulsing rain.
Nor marvel if now, by Christ the King made free
Ev'n of the things which once were sin to me,
In every whispering leaf I catch His call,
In every rustling bush His robes discover,
And Nature, once a lover,
Now find evangelist, from leap to fall,
Knowing my God in star and bud and breeze—
Nay, if I found His presence not in these,
I think I could not find my God at all.

SALVATOR INSALVATUS.

OTHERS he saved, himself he could not save.
To wrestlers with a sea of fears he gave
A strengthening hand which plucked them from the
 wave.

But who so great could him assist, when he
Also in turn endured the agony
Of questionings which no lesser mind could share,
Of thoughts no lesser mind could know or bear ?
Wherefore 'twas his to move abroad and shed
Largesse of life to souls that else were dead,
Lifting a brow so beautiful and brave
The sympathy he never seemed to crave
None thought to give. For who that saw could tell
(Unless his peers, if such indeed they were)
That this grand saint had also been in hell,
Nay, even then perchance were tortured there ?

SALVATOR AGNOSCENS.

OTHERS he saved, himself he would not save.
Therefore to him the Lord of Spirits gave,
The pitying Father who rejoiced to know
A human colleague in His ceaseless task
Of bearing mortal sin,
Of succouring mortal woe,
The guerdon that he never thought to ask,
The crownnet that he never thought to win,
A grace that rose beyond all human right
Save his whose honour was the King's delight ;
As thus, to bear upon his front the sign,
The graven symbol of his Sire Divine,
By the far glint of that all-saving Name
His lineage and high office to proclaim.
Wherefore the folk that love the cowering ways,
The creatures timorous of the tread of man,
Him their compassionate brother knew and ran
From refuge of their undiscovered days,
As to the cloak of night's maternal mist,
To shelter of this loved evangelist.
And wounded Sorrow, couched in coverts dim,
Left in the darksome pathways of the mind,
Disabled Grief, by clutching pains confined,
Raised crying hands and travelling plaint to him,
Whose love forgot itself nor knew it trod
So close in station to its stricken God,
Knew not it stepped, at every painful dint,
Where its dear Master Christ left bleeding print,
Nor of its pangs this rich fruition guessed,
That in its eyes the Lord was manifest.

UNDER SUSUNIA.

HERE let him rest, where Eve with sober gaze
Stands sentinel and hastening Night delays ;
Where the hushed charm of this still mountain
draws

The slipping shades to momentary pause.
This rugged brow will first, aghast with flame,
The outbreak of that last dread dawn proclaim,
And first blaze forth the advancing steps of Him
To judgment moving with His seraphim.
Leave them our friend. Yet oh ! that he might
hear

The thanks we lavish for a life so dear,
Praising in him that heav'n-recovered light
Which sometime shone athwart our gloomy night !
Vain, vain, how vain ! No words of ours can make
These lidded eyes from sacred sleep awake,
As nought shall keep them shut when earth and sky
Shall of their Master's coming form one cry.
For he who, while the scoffing host denied,
In hourly-flushing clouds the signs descried,
Far-seen aloft, the mystic steps that ran
Vaunt-couriers to the speeding Son of Man,
When Earth with Heav'n shall in the shout unite :
" Behold ! "—fear not but he will wake outright.

THE ETERNAL COMRADE.

I KNEW Him late ? Not so ! Our feet have trod
One path since Time began :
Ages ere I was man
Our comradeship was known.
And for the love which lives betwixt us twain,
Whose long fulfilment fell to Time alone,
(Since none could of a thing so old and great
The far beginning give or any date
To that which knew nor birth nor travail-pain)
It waxed, but did not wane,
Nor shed its leaves, as human loves which grow
Deciduous, stripped before each whirling snow,
But in deep splendour ran
This root whereof I hold the blossomed rod
Far back into the purposes of God.

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS.

So I forget Him ? Nay I do but feign,
As lovers oft in youth's delightful game
Forget awhile, because their love is set
Too deep, they know, to falter or forget,
Nor needeth to be bound by other chain
Than knowledge of the love betwixt these twain.
How think you ? Though in whatsoe'er disguise

My Lord should wrap Him from His lover's eyes,
Neither in garb nor lineament the same,
Yet—think you ! if He came !
Would not my foot to Him instinctive turn ?
Would not my soul, that knew Him
And swerved its glance unto Him,
With sudden, secret, swift allegiance burn ?
O most observant, most alert of men !
Why, you who blame me did not mark how then
He passed me, knowing that I knew Him there,
Knowing me, though I looked not neither stirred
Nor spake to Him a word,
Assuredly of my Lord not unaware.

CHRISTUS IMMANENS.

I KNOW whose fingers fell with light caress,
I know whose whispered word
My sinking spirit stirred
And soothed this dull distress.
How can I help but know Him, since He lies
In every path apparent to my eyes,
Unmasked by every lifting wind, and known
By shadow with each shaft of sunlight thrown,
Revealed with every breeze
That draws apart the green skirts of the trees ?
It were less strange should I move unaware
Of this firm sod, this circumambient air,
Than if I knew Him not whose way must lie
Beside my own for all eternity.

VENI, SALVATOR.

LORD, when the weight lies heavy on my heart
Of doubts and fears of long ago,
Of memories that will not depart,
And thoughts of ancient woe ;
When wrongs received awake the spirit still
With torture of the long-surviving thrill ;
When old defeats to vision leap, and claim
Fresh tribute of the unforgotten shame ;
When, whilst the world, with hoarse, impatient
 shout,
Batters assault against my holiest place,
The soul, a craven in its last redoubt,
Cries out for terms of grace :
Then, ere the fortress of the spirit fall
And the brave flag for evermore be furled,
Thou whom the tempests know,
Wave-stepper to whose tread
The huddling waters sleek their head
And the awed passions sink to tranquil flow,
O let Thy voice across the tumult call,
And clear that I may hear,
“ Fear not ! for I have overcome the world.”

THE INVOCATION.

O THOU of old confest
The lover of the frail and faint to rise !
Thou by thy wounded hands and stricken eyes
Known for my Lord, my Master manifest !
O Thou whose watchful care,
Spreading as Heav'n and gracious as the air,
With wings that brood upon this vast unrest,
Alone can calm, now bid at last be still
These racking winds that wreak their clamorous
will,
And from an alien track
Thy fugitive call back.
Dear visage marked with seams that should be
mine,
Marred more than any face of Adam's line,
Send but a glance, and I shall know and turn ;
A whisper, and with shame my spirit burn ;
Knowing amid the wreck of worlds right well
That voice, whatever tempests' break and swell,
Knowing, whatever clouds should seek to hide,
The wounded Love that for its vassal died,
And in renewal of its fruitful pain
With proud, glad eyes would step to death again.

TWO IN THE DESERT.

STRANGER with the piercing eyes,
Stranger with the wistful brow,
Now no more refrain replies,
Hear, I pray, and answer now
" Who art Thou ? "

Never hast Thou left my side,
Still with me Thou deign'st to go ;
Leave not now but with me bide.
See my sun in dying glow
Sinking low !

I would ask Thee who Thou art,
Speak that I may understand ;
Nay, but Thou shalt *not* depart.
I, since evening veils the land,
Grip Thy hand.

What is this that Thou hast done ?
Wherefore pierced and wherefore bleed
Hands through which the nails have gone ?
Nay, I know Thee now indeed,
Know my need.

O my glory and my shame !
I that grieved and vexed Thee sore,
Now Thy healing promise claim,
Kneeling for Thy touch implore,
Proud no more.

Thou wilt never from me go ;
Clouds and darkness shut the sky.
Comrades till the morning show,
Let us travel, lest I die,
Thou and I.

NAIN.

WHEN on the weeping village came
The marching dusk, and day went out in flame,
A Figure from the darkness strode
With whom the splendour still abode,
The light of God that in His visage shone,
Though from the travelling planet gone.
The widow ceased from tears, the bearers stayed,
And at those eyes that gazed
Grave where the torches blazed
All looked, in wonder what of word or deed
Would from that Presence pitiful proceed.
He to whom death, with all we fear of ill,
Was as a veil that He could lift at will
Stept to the bier and, by compulsion kind
Upon the fleeting spirit laid,
Recalled the life, then into night again
Vanishing left behind
Tumultuous ecstasy of joy for pain.

So unto me befell
His presence, whence and how I cannot tell.
I only know He came, I only know
The life that now is mine to Him I owe.

THE WATCHER.

REFT of the friends and hopes I had,
I linger on, content and glad,
Obscure, contemned, infirm, alone,
Blither with fall of fortune grown,
Cribbed in this hovel, where I wait
The summons sure to come, though late ;
Content because two things are sure,
Through all uncertainties endure,
Two things are firm, though all should fail,
Though all things else be idle tale,
Two things,—as thus ; that He who came
And set this palsied heart aflame,
And quickened from the deadened past
To richer, fuller life at last, . .
He came and went again ? Not so !
'Tis true, but this beyond I know ;
I saw a Face, a Hand touched mine,
A Face and Hand I knew divine,
Then vanished, but I feel Him yet
At every turn of pathway set,
And know that I shall see again
That Face which dawned upon my pain,
Shall meet those kindling eyes, shall feel
Those fingers that caress and heal,
And know Him for the Man I met
(I do not fear that *He* forget).

So then I wait and watch for Him,
And often, when the day grows dim,
When my long toil draws to its close,
And with the gloaming comes repose,

John in Prison

A sudden shadow on the room,
A seeming foot-fall in the gloom,
And I am turned to see and hear
The Lord of my poor life draw near.
For " Watch " He saith, " for sign and call
At cockcrow or at evenfall,
When noon or midnight holds the air.
Watch, lest I find you unaware."
So then I watch, while life sinks low ;
I know that He will come, I know
That even now His couriers ride
Viewless but busy, at my side,
And fifty times a day I turn
With all I am at gaze to learn
If 't were His garment's rustle I heard
Or whisper of His secret word.
Nor should I marvel now to raise
My head and meet His sudden gaze,
Feel His kind eyes confront my own,
And thrill beneath the touch long known.
Nay, even then I surely thought
Hint of His coming I had caught !
It might have been, for thus He spake
" One hour watch—canst not ?—for My sake.
I will not tarry, but come to thee."
Ev'n so, Lord Jesus, come to me !

UNDER THE DEWS.

Now, ere the twilight of my life begin,
And cloaking ~~midnight~~ gather round my ways,
And in the environing dusk, with baffled gaze,
I miss the light I loved and cheerful din,
O Lord Emmanuel, wounded with my sin,
Known nearer than amid the noontide blaze,
Now to Thy watching Heav'n's most hushed amaze
Reveal the bruised love whereby I win.

Spread forth Thy palms, Thy side so cleft asunder,
Thy piercèd feet, Thy brow thus foully crowned,
Lay bare. But O, to move severest wonder
And make thy vassal proud, my Lord and Lover,
With that gashed hand, (let this much grace be
found),
Draw one more veil and thy torn soul discover.

WITHOUT THE GATE.

I DARE not ask for pardon, for I know
Mine was the hand, O Love, that wrought Thy woe.
Lift not those palms ! I know them jagged and
torn,
I know for whom that torturing crown was worn.
I am the man ! And I have suffered too,
Nor suffered least in this, because I knew
For whose offence the killing sorrow fell
On Thee, my Lord, who loved'st Thy serf too well.
Ah ! Wherefore didst Thou so ? Came there no
sign
From all this whispering universe of Thine,
From leaguèd wind and stone, Thy myriad spies,
Yea, Night herself, replete with watching eyes,
(From these that knew) to warn Thee of this man,
Ere yet its bootless course Thy pity ran ?
Hast Thou forgiv'n ? For, though I dare not pray.
I know that wounded gaze still bent my way,
Those stricken eyes, suffused with mist for me,
Striving to lure my shamefast looks to Thee.
Yet strive no more ! Let Mercy shut the gate,
Since vainly, if for me, 'twill open wait.
Though I have sinned a thousand times before,
And crept back, pardoned, to Thy side once more,
Now I have done—henceforth I fall to those
Who needs must love Thy cause and hate Thy foes',
Yet stand apart, nor ever dare to aid,
Although no rebels, ranks their fall betrayed.
O look not thus ! Because I know it just,
Anger I could endure, and grief I must,

But that those eyes should burn with kindness still !
Dear Love, find out some gentler way to kill !
What, shall I be forgiv'n ! I'll turn again.
Whence in those eyes, if not for me, this pain ?
Forget the words I spake. I dare not leave Thee.
My mood was wild—O, let it not deceive Thee !
I have wronged my Light, yet would have place
thereby.

Drive me not from Thy presence, or I die.
Ah, what would that avail, my death, to Thee ?
Or would Thy love be wounded less for me ?
Wouldst Thou not grieve because Thy vassal died
To the end apostate from Thy bleeding side,
Unreconciled, and by his own wild will
An exile from Thy martyred mercy still ?
But O forgive ! For if Thou shouldst deny,
(As sure I know Thou canst not), I must die.
Forgive ; nor heed the words wherein my heart,
A broken rebel, bore so scanty part.
Though I have justly fall'n to heaviest blame,
For all my sin, for all my sin and shame,
Erase not from Thy book my scripted name.
What profit would my blood be, should I go
Towards the painful pit ? The dead, I know,
May lift a warning light to after days
But, Lord, it is the living that must praise.

EASTERTIDE (1911).

'TWAS Easter, but I could not see Him rise,
Because mine eyes
Were worn with sleepless nights and days awake
With burning heat and tasks that made them
ache.

Nor could I catch his voice in any tone
Of hymn or chant or alien speech unknown.

But since I mourned the blot,
(The sinful folly of having eye and ear,
Yet Him perceiving not)

I hid my face and prayed : " For Mercy's sake,
Dear Lord, being mindful of that garden close
Where sleep, that found no harbour with Thy foes
Shut fast the lids of three,

Thy lovers that were sworn to watch with Thee,
Have pity on John that cannot realise
That Thou art ris'n, that cannot see nor hear, `
Though he believes Thee near."

SUNSET ON THE HEATHER.

FATHER Whose hand did dress
This purple wilderness
And yonder skies
Make restful and inspiring to mine eyes !
Grant that my latest day
Like loveliness display,
And unto tired eyes show
E'en such a restful glow,
And with no less triumphant light
Lift prophecy beyond th' impending night.

SUNSET AT AYLESBURY (1909).

CLOUDS shut the upper sky,
But in the west, behold !
The sunset keeps a narrow shaft of gold,
O'er which the last birds fly.
Did you not see ? God lifted
The fringes of that curtain dark, and smiled,
Through vistas glory-rifted,
To me, His child,
Goodnight.
I shall not tremble now to miss the light.

SUNSET ON THE RED SEA.

A WASTE of steel-dark waters, and a line
Of never-ending crags that bear no tree,
Nor any sign
Of life where never aught of life could be,
Which frowned, when noon was high,
In pitiless compact with the beating sky !
Dusk falls ! And in the wake of burning Day,
With blazing scimitar,
And eyes that flame afar,
The Angel of the Sunset comes this way,
And cloaks the brows of every rigid height
With royal vesture of outfolding night.
Was it not well that He
Who with His presence Heav'n and Earth ful-
fils,
Who gave white crests and thunder to the sea,
And to the land its grace
Of sliding waters, blowing winds, green face,
Should crown His glory thus, in that He spills
His richest sunsets on the desolate hills ?

THE SEEKERS.

I SOUGHT Him in the trodden paths of men,
The tide of life, the traffic's surge and press ;
Nor in the silence less,
I sought and found, where lurked aloof from ken
The shrinking folk, each woodland denizen
And every timid life that from the eyes
Of glaring Day to patch and hummock flies,
To waving bent, or where the clustered sedge
The mead infringed with wet and perilous edge,
And June's wild roses bloomed, the covert's crown,
With ruffling leaves above the shining brook
That through dark ways its dimpled journey took.
Nor vainly on the plunging wilderness
Of climbing waves towards iron heights that frown
At niggard Heav'n, that looks in anger down,
I sought the Love whose pleading looks pursue
All paths whereby I pass ;
To whom all ways I knew
Were as a mould and glass,
And every wind a rumour, every tone
An echo charged with mandates to His own.

VESTIGIA.

I.

“As oft within a forest one may know
By broken twig, and herb that, lately pressed,
Not yet has wholly reared its slanting crest,
His track whose feet have trod,
By witness of the leaf and conscious sod,
The yielding ways an hour since—even so,
Meeting this flower, a snow-white speck that shines
Scarce visible 'neath this palm, and yon strange
bird,
Whose restless steps a secret knowledge speak,
How well my soul divines
That He has passed this way whom now I seek !”

So spake I musing. Straight a finger stirred
The whispering fronds and at my ear I heard
A voice that answered : “ Foolish, slow to see !
Why ‘ passed ’ ? Behold Me even now with thee ! ”

II.

I looked, but saw not. Spake the voice again .
“ O blind of heart and erring ! Canst thou mark
The babbling turf, yet see not where I stand
Whose dominant presence shuts thy either hand ?
It matters not. Then go
Still forward, doubting nothing—nay, but know
Thou canst not miss Me nor desire in vain
To see Me, since the very road whereby
Thy stumbling footsteps move, that road am I,
Alike the sun that cheers thee and the dark
That soothes thy spirit. Exult, for thou shalt see
Myself whom now thou bear'st unseen with thee.”

THE PROSPECT.*

WELL do I know that unto me will fall
A little light to mark the end of all ;
A little space for praying and to keep
Calm tryst with God, before I turn to sleep ;
Brief silence, as the clamouring voices cease,
And respite comes for pain, for labour ease ;
As heav'n, that bears no stars yet in its crest,
Recalls its scattered glories to the west.
Then, O my God, ere I fare forth alone,
My goal unguessed, my journey all unknown,
Let me behold, with beckoning hands and face
Whereon the splendour makes abiding place,
Backed by the sky, beyond these hills of Time,
My Guide upon the mount that I must climb.

Cf. Mr. William Canton's The Shepherd.

“ So be it given thee to behold,
My heart, when life's last air grows chill,
Thy Shepherd moving by the fold
At sundown on the heavenly hill.”

THE LAMP IN THE SEA.

ONCE I had light, or deemed I had,
Yea, light within myself, whereby
I warmed my friends and made my fellows glad.
Bear witness, ye, in whom the love burns yet
Whereto no sundering seas a bar could set,
Which knew no term nor finish, nor shall know
Until God's great four-winded trumpet blow,
Nor then shall suffer loss, but conquer Fate
In process of an everlasting date.
Were there not those grew glad when I came nigh,
Who knew me proud to bear their love, nor less
A portion claimed in my great thankfulness,
Lifting with me a common heart of praise
For this deep gift which glorified our days ?
This, then, was mine, but now
My countenance grows emptied of the light,
And round my darkened brow
Gathers the purple of impending night,
A mist which veils the faces lately known,
And leaves me with my Father most alone,
Not ill-content, be sure, to be at last
Shut in with clouds, and by His purpose vast
Borne as by moving waves, beset and blind
Till His full splendour waken in my mind.
All praise for night ! And that the spark has gone
Which in my spirit shone !
Praise that this darkness should succeed in turn !
Praise that my paltry beam should cease to burn,
A lamp plunged in the Sea,
And drowned, my God, in Thee !

VENITE, CANTEMUS.

Prima Vox EACH morn my soul with prayer and praise
 Frequents the posterns of the King,
 And, going thence on earthly ways,
 Still towards her fountain-head doth sing.

Nor less at eve, when from their lair
 The first grey shadows down the air
 Scatter like snowflakes, when they fall
 To ground in trooping festival,

She singeth Him whose palace-floor
 With matted stars is darkness-proof,
 And from whose sky-sequestered door
 The lurking whirlwinds slink aloof ;

Secunda Whose sway from farthest west doth hold
 Unto the orient's dawn-lit gold,
 Ev'n from those rivers where the sun
 Waters his steeds when day is done

Unto that mount whence on his way
 Leaps forth the glistening Lord of day,
 Driving, where'er his bayonets win,
 The pickets of the darkness in.

Tertia Who weighs the tempests in His hand,
 And holds the planets at command ;

Quarta Nor, from this firmamental blaze,
 Disdains to watch our murky ways,

Ordaining over quaggy mires
 The will-o'-wisp's night-errant fires,
 Checking their tiny revels quaint,
 Keeping their harms in wise restraint.

Prima Because, as in the greatest thing,
In these small matters is He King,
Knowing they form, though lacking weight,
Harmonious adjuncts to His state.

Secunda And furthermore 'tis love for us
In care for these preponderates thus,
Because, although the isles are naught
But very small things in His thought ;

Tertia Nor all the continents which glow
Betwixt the zones of heat and snow,
Yea, all this belted earth, could give
His praise its fit prerogative,

Were each o' the thousand hills a tongue
Shouting its fellow hills among ;

Quarta Nor Lebanon suffice to burn,
For spicy incense, at His urn ;

Prima Yet unto us, who are His care,
He knows the isles are very fair,
And cedar-shadowed Lebanon
A goodly thing to gaze upon.

Omnes Wherefore my soul can never leave
From praising this eternal King,
But, whether dawn or closing eve,
Still towards her fountain-head doth sing.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

WHEN through the dwindling hours of day
The Master of its paths has run,
And silent Eve, in handmaid gray,
Draws her calm veil, and day is done,

Tired wings and eyes that love the shade
Their longed-for tryst with darkness keep ;
The lilies of the soul are laid
At rest upon the hills of sleep.

And whilst beneath the brooding skies
Night calls her hurrying creatures home,
My spirit too for slumber hies ;
Each errant thought must cease to roam,

Recalled on no high thing to rest,
But just a brief, glad space to mark
How, though the sun has left the west,
His humble proxy fights the dark ;

This glow-worm, stationed in the grass,
A fairy lantern to the night
Hangs out, whereby I trust to pass
To God, the fountain of its light.

THE THANKSGIVING.

GOD, wise beyond all human thought,
 Denied to my weak, selfish will
 The liberty of work it sought
 And circumscribed me still.
 Now from my burning heart of hearts
 No peevish, murmuring cry upstarts,
 But, in a sober thankfulness
 Subdued, I praise His name and bless.

Dark was my path, obscure and dark,
 Shut off, concealed the life I led,
 Nor burned more brightly than a spark
 Heav'n's light above my head.
 Yet in my lonely night I gained
 A strength I might not have obtained
 Had a more fervent light been lent
 By my unfriendly firmament.

No revelation clear I pray,
 I do not tempt my God for sign,
 Let but the pilgrim's guardian ray,
 As heretofore, be mine.
 Though darkness as a bow be bent
 Above my steps, I am content,
 If but that former light be given,
 Slight rush beneath no garish heaven.

John in Prison

The splendour of the blazing noon
I hardly for a moment knew.
One high conviction God, as soon
As granted me, withdrew.
After the light the dark again,
After the ecstasy the pain,
The rightful path once shown, the light
Merged into the surrounding night.

Now am I thankfulness alone ;
My former sullen fit is past.
My songs, of clamorous, peevish tone,
Are nightingales at last.
So there be light whereby to tread,
What need to see the path ahead ?
What need of spangled hemisphere,
So the direction but be clear ?

THE FAREWELL.

SEE, I have come. Though alien from your ways
And elsewhere busied, I have heard you call
And answered, ere I go to hear no more,
Or, hearing, not to answer save with leap
And tumult of the unforgetting heart.
O woods and meadows, have I kept the tryst?
Ye knew me faithful, surely knew me yours
And knit to your allegiance, prompt to own
So dear a fealty. How should I not hear,
Whose roving steps these many years have been
So constantly among you and mine eyes
Have taken seisin for the Muse (whose state
Knows me attendant) of each sight and shape
Of flitting loveliness from grove and bush
And tufted hillock (shapes most truly known
For thoughts as breathing and as beautiful
As ever Oread, visioned on the heath,
Or, as she glided to her parent oak,
Glimpsed through the white boughs of the tas-
selled birch,
The drifting Hamadryad). These I bear
Immutable through change, for ever mine,
By clearest title mine, inalienate
Through all vicissitude. Then, though I go,
Be sure, 'tis to return. Be sure that still
I bear the freedom of your glades with me.
Be sure, Fairmead, that I shall come again
And look to see your aged oak put forth
Green boughs to greet me, though sev'n summers
past

John in Prison

Dead with exceeding eld, too deaf to hear
Spring's mounting clarion, rapt with dreams that
turn

To his far-verdured youth, to days when swept.
Or ever Saxon Harold fell, the march
And swift rout of the plundering Dane, in flight
For Lea's dark waterhead. And, O Monk Wood,
Crown every pollard oak with fern, each nook
With butcher's broom and daphne, closer yet
Your thickets draw, that never alien feet
Break in on owl and yaffle, steps that crush
Your adder's tongue and beat your bracken down.
Keep jealous brows, for I must come to find
Your purlieus virgin and your secret slades
Untrodden, save of gentle visitants,
By night still silent, save for elfin horn
And march of faery revel beneath the furze.
Still on their ramparts, where by day the snake
Glides in the rustling heather and by dusk
The reckless moth against the pilgrim flies,
In shadowy war beneath the ancient moon,
With noiseless tramp and dint of bloodless arms,
Let the mailed legions* break again and drive
The idly-valiant foe, in onslaught grim
And arrowy conflict 'mid the pleached grove.
Forget not, Honeylane ! And deeper hide
Your fragrant fern,† lest prowling hands purloin,
Robbing my Muse, a laughing shepherdess,
For whom the hills grow fillets and the dells
A thousand crowns ; whose rifling fingers pluck
Buds for her trailing crook and for her brows
Green fronds and fragrant horns of honeysuckle.

* There is a " Roman Camp " at Loughton.

† *Lastrea montana* (the mountain buckler fern).

Be sure she looks for chaplets still from you,
Nor for the changed times will bate a jot
Of her appointed tribute, store of flowers.
But, O Highbeach, be yours the greatest love,
Of groves the Muse's favourite, since the reed
Of Maro plained beneath the archèd shade !
Forget not him, the hapless, whom the stars,
Loving too little one so proud to take
Arms in his part against them and to lift
A heav'n-affronting forehead, drove to death
Untimely ; him whose lyre remembers yet,
Still voiceful though the hand that struck be cold,
Your crowded vespers and that after-song,
When dusk drew in, and all the elfin chase
Was garlanded with odorous bloom and rang
Beyond all woodland music, with the voice
Of deathless harpers, every ancient tomb
And all the forest market-place afire
With swinging lamp and censer, while the chime*
Pealed over all which gave a human tone
To chaunt of cuckoo and of nightingale
And the grave music of the elfin-folk.
O beechen shades, remember Vivian† yet !
Remember him whose nobler melody
Outlives the night's frail pageant, and the strains
Heard with the moon, and evening's strife of
tongues.
Mindful of that high laud, remember now
And mourn thy poet's fate, nor unto me,
Who muse thy love in other accents, turn
An ear forgetful. O be sure my steps
Will seek and find again, whether I come

Of the Highbeach Church.

See John Davidson's *Eclogues*.

John in Prison

When April in the blackthorn bears a wand
Which in her snowy fingers breaks and buds,
Or when along the mist-clad evening moves
Autumn, an awful queen, with scarlet brows
Clustered with flaming leaf and brambleberry,
And I beside this stripped and knotted trunk,
The whistling wind attendant at my heels,
Look to your russet heights and with glad haste
Climb toward that fastness. Now as November
spills

Her filaments and floating gossamers,
And every armed thistle and each proud thorn
Bears of Our Lady's cloak some precious threads,
A sorrow from the mournful season pluck,
And answer these my vows. Keep faith, High-
beach !

Hear me, and let this constant holly stand
For pledge 'twixt thee and me, through destined
storms

Our love's unchanging symbol. Dost thou hear ?
In whispering leaf and rustling covert speak,
Accessor to this compact. Answer now
Thine exile's incantation, nor refuse
The Muse's word of power. Give tongue again,
Now, as your lover passes. Woods and groves,
Oberon our witness, take my vows and keep
Accordant fealty, till the travelling years
Gather my due steps to your paths again.

AT THE LIMITS.

I HAVE all day been travelling and at length
Have gained the limit of the wooded ways,
Passing toward the desert where with sand
And thorn and lurking asp the marbly strength
Of untried limbs that hitherto have known
Nought but the high cathedrals, pillared up
By beech and fir, and strewn with rustling leaf
And brittle needle in lieu of rushes brown,
Will be sore put to it to arrive unhurt.
Nay, even now I have hardly passed beyond
The comfort of the resin-laden air,
So that the nymphs and satyrs, peeping out
And running from their shelter, pelt my back
And lingering face with fir-cones and with burrs.
“ Yet one song more, ye Muses, one song more,
And I forget the songs I sang before,”
I fain would cry, but unseen fingers laid
Control my sinful lips, so that I pass
Silent, nor heed the calling ones behind,
On to the threshold of a higher life.

John in Prison

THE LAST SONG.

Now that the strife is over,
And travel-girt I stand
And look towards the Christ and wait
The beckon of His hand,
I recollect how often
My lips were loud in song,
And pray the grace to wake again
My lyre, but not for long.
Yet one song more, ye Muses, one song more,
And I forget the songs I sang before.

The summer's idle pleasaunce
Is wholly passed away.
Gone are the lute, and flowers that lent
High lustre to that May.
Ev'n when those hours were with me
A Shape surpassing fair
Stood up, and shamed the lilies bound
About my careless hair.
Bear with me yet, ye Muses, this song more,
And I forget the songs I sang before.

My brow was ringed with blossoms,
But His with many a thorn,
And I was froward and repaid
That gentle gaze with scorn.
But at the last He won me,
My eyes with grief grew dim,
I flung my flowers away, and passed
Into the night with Him.
Yet one song more, ye Muses, one song more,
And I forget the man I was before.

Now am I forward ventured
And brook no backward gaze,
Though music of the nymphs and Pan
Sounds still, from ancient days.
Beneath a gloomy sunset
I stand, but void of care ;
Though dark the zenith, yet I know
The morrow will be fair.
Ye Muses, I have sung this song, the last.
Bear hence the lyre ; the former days are
past.

THE DESERTED SHRINE.

TO G. L.

The shrine is silent—on the dissonant shout
Of shameless revel what else should follow, friend ?
What else but perfect calm, that in the end
These walls may give a perfect music out ?

FINIS.

THE pitcher which the Muses gave,
So often with Castalian wave
Filled to the twinkling brim, is shattered ;
Its dust, which seemed of gold, is scattered.
My wild desires and hopes are dead ;
Hid is Ambition's towering head ;
A solemn cast comes o'er my brow ;
The flames of youth are dying now :
Yet I'll, like phoenix, re-aspire
Out of the ashes of that fire.

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